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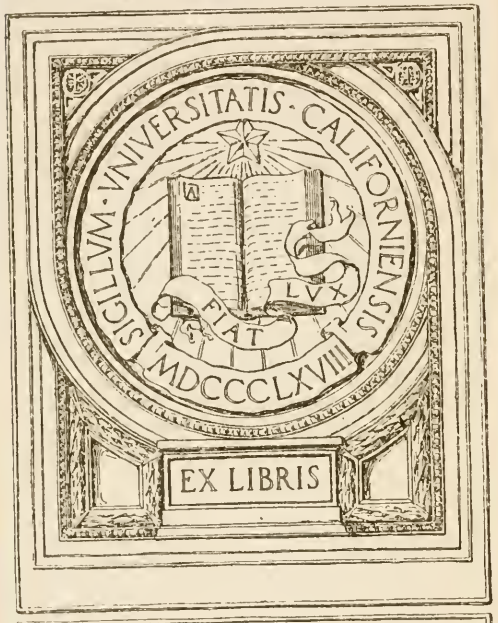

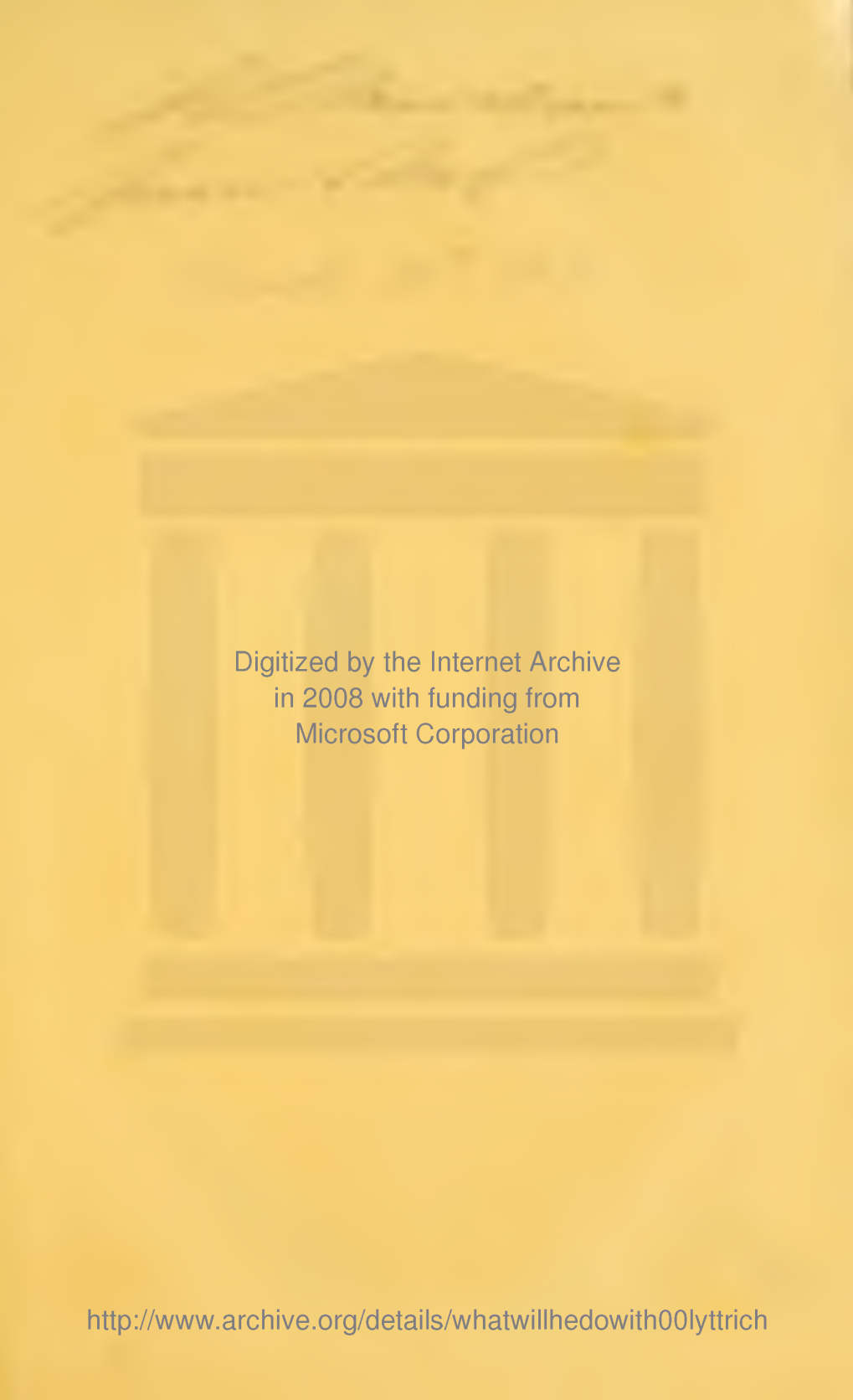
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BY PISISTRATUS CAXTON.

A Novel.

BY SIR E. BULWER LYTTON BART.

AUTHOR OF

"MY NOVEL; OR, VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE," "THE CAXTONS," "PELHAM," "NIGHT AND MORNING," "THE LAST OF THE BARONS," &c., &c.

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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

In which the History opens with a description of the Social Manners, Habits, and Amusements of the English People, as exhibited in an immemorial National Festivity.—Characters to be commemorated in the History introduced and graphically portrayed, with a nasological illustration.—Original suggestions as to the idiosyncracies engendered by trades and callings, with other matters worthy of note, conveyed in artless dialogue, after the manner of Herodotus, Father of History (Mother unknown).

It was a summer Fair in one of the prettiest villages in Surrey. The main street was lined with booths abounding in toys, gleaming crockery, gay ribbons, and gilded gingerbread. Farther on, where the street widened into the ample village-green, rose the more pretending fabrics which lodged the attractive forms of the Mermaid, the Norfolk Giant, the Pig-faced Lady, the Spotted Boy, and the Calf with Two Heads; while high over even these edifices, and occupying the most conspicuous vantage-ground, a lofty stage promised to rural play-goers the "Grand Melodramatic Performance of The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." Music, lively if artless, resounded on every side; drums, fifes, penny-whistles, cat-calls, and a hand-organ played by a dark foreigner, from the height of whose shoulder a cynical but observant monkey eyed the hubbub and cracked his nuts.

It was now sunset—the throng at the fullest—an animated, joyous scene. The day had been sultry; no clouds were to be seen, except low on the western horizon, where they stretched, in lengthened ridges of gold and purple, like the border-land between earth and sky. The tall elms on the green were still, save, near the great stage, one or two, upon which young urchins had climbed; and their laughing faces peered forth, here and there, from the foliage trembling under their restless movements.

Amidst the crowd, as it streamed sauntteringly along, were two spectators—strangers to the place, as was notably proved by the attention they excited, and the broad jokes their dress and appearance provoked from the rustic wits—jokes which they took with amused good-humor, and sometimes retaliated with a zest which had already made them very popular personages; indeed, there was that about them which propitiated liking. They were young, and the freshness of enjoyment was so visible in their faces that it begot a sympathy, and wherever they went other faces brightened round them.

One of the two whom we have thus individualized was of that enviable age, ranging from five-and-twenty to seven-and-twenty, in which, if a man can not contrive to make life very pleasant—pitiable, indeed, must be the state of his digestive organs. But you might see by this gentleman's countenance, that if there were many like him, it would be a worse world for the doctors. His cheek, though not highly-colored, was yet ruddy and clear; his hazel eyes were lively and keen; his hair, which escaped in loose clusters from a jean shooting-cap set jauntily on a well-shaped head, was of that deep sunny auburn rarely seen but in persons of vigorous and hardy temperament. He was good-looking on the whole, and would have deserved the more flattering epithet of handsome, but for his nose, which was what the French call "a nose in the air"—not a nose supercilious, not a nose provocative, as such noses mostly are, but a nose decidedly in earnest to make the best of itself and of things in general—a nose that would push its way up in life, but so pleasantly that the most irritable fingers would never itch to lay hold of it. With such a nose a man might play the violoncello, marry for love, or even write poetry, and yet not go to the dogs. Never would he stick in the mud so long as he followed that nose in the air!

By the help of that nose this gentleman wore a black velveteen jacket of foreign cut; a mustache and imperial (then much rarer in England than they have been since the siege of Sebastopol); and yet left you perfectly convinced that he was an honest Englishman, who had not only no designs on your pocket, but would not be easily duped by any designs upon his own.

The companion of the personage thus sketched might be somewhere about seventeen; but his gait, his air, his lithe, vigorous frame, showed a manliness at variance with the boyish bloom of his face. He struck the eye much more than his elder comrade. Not that he was regularly handsome—far from it; yet it is no paradox to say that he was beautiful—at least, few indeed were the women who would not have called him so. His hair, long like his friend's, was of a dark chestnut, with gold gleaming through it where the sun fell, inclining to curl, and singularly soft and silken in its texture. His large, clear, dark-blue, happy eyes were fringed with long ebon lashes, and set under brows which already wore the expression of intellectual power, and, better still, of frank courage and open loyalty. His complexion was fair, and somewhat pale, and his lips in laughing showed teeth exquisitely white and even. But though his profile was clearly cut, it was far from the Greek ideal; and he wanted the height of stature which is usually considered essential to the personal pretensions of the male sex. Without be-

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ing positively short, he was still under middle height, and, from the compact development of his proportions, seemed already to have attained his full growth. His dress, though not foreign, like his comrade's, was peculiar; a broad-brimmed straw-hat, with a wide blue ribbon; shirt-collar turned down, leaving the throat bare; a dark-green jacket of thinner material than cloth; white trowsers and waistcoat completed his costume. He looked like a mother's darling—perhaps he was one.

Scratch across his back went one of those ingenious mechanical contrivances familiarly in vogue at fairs, which are designed to impress upon the victim to whom they are applied the pleasing conviction that his garment is rent in twain.

The boy turned round so quickly that he caught the arm of the offender—a pretty village-girl, a year or two younger than himself. "Found in the act, sentenced, punished," cried he, snatching a kiss, and receiving a gentle slap. "And now, good for evil, here's a ribbon for you—choose."

The girl slunk back shyly, but her companions pushed her forward, and she ended by selecting a cherry-colored ribbon, for which the boy paid carelessly, while his elder and wiser friend looked at him with grave, compassionate rebuke, and grumbled out—"Dr. Franklin tells us that once in his life he paid too dear for a whistle; but then he was only seven years old, and a whistle has its uses. But to pay such a price for a scratchback! Prodigal! Come along!"

As the friends strolled on, naturally enough all the young girls who wished for ribbons, and were possessed of scratchbacks, followed in their wake. Scratch went the instruments, but in vain.

"Lasses," said the elder, turning sharply upon them his nose in the air, "ribbons are plentiful—shillings scarce; and kisses, though pleasant in private, are insipid in public. What, still! Beware! know that, innocent as we seem, we are women-eaters; and if you follow us farther, you are devoured!" So saying, he expanded his jaws to a width so preternaturally large, and exhibited a row of grinders so formidable, that the girls fell back in consternation. The friends turned down a narrow alley between the booths, and though still pursued by some adventurous and mercenary spirits, were comparatively undisturbed as they threaded their way along the back of the booths, and arrived at last on the village-green, and in front of the Great Stage.

"Oho, Lionel!" quoth the elder friend; "Thespian and classical—worth seeing, no doubt." Then, turning to a grave cobbler in leathern apron, who was regarding the *dramatis personæ* ranged in front of the curtain with saturnine interest, he said, "You seem attracted, Sir; you have probably already witnessed the performance."

"Yes," returned the Cobbler; "this is the third day, and to-morrow's the last. I arn't missed once yet, and I shan't miss; but it arn't what it was a while back."

"That is sad; but then the same thing is said of every thing by every body who has reached your respectable age, friend. Summers and suns, stupid old watering-places, and pretty young women 'arn't what they were a while back.' If men and things go on degenerating in this way, our grandchildren will have a dull time of it!"

The Cobbler eyed the young man, and nodded, approvingly. He had sense enough to comprehend the ironical philosophy of the reply—and our Cobbler loved talk out of the common way. "You speaks truly and cleverly, Sir. But if old folks do always say that things are worse than they were, ben't there always summat in what is always said? I'm for the old times; my neighbor, Joe Spruce, is for the new, and says we are all a-progressing. But he's a pink—I'm a blue."

"You are a blue!" said the boy Lionel—"I don't understand."

"Young 'un, I'm a Tory—that's blue; and Spruce is a Rad—that's pink! And, what is more to the purpose, he is a tailor, and I'm a cobbler."

"Aha!" said the elder, with much interest; "more to the purpose, is it? How so?"

The Cobbler put the forefinger of the right hand on the forefinger of the left; it is the gesture of a man about to ratiocinate or demonstrate—as Quintilian, in his remarks on the oratory of fingers, probably observes; or, if he has failed to do so, it is a blot on his essay.

"You see, Sir," quoth the Cobbler, "that a man's business has a deal to do with his manner of thinking. Every trade, I take it, has ideas as belong to it. Butchers don't see life as bakers do; and if you talk to a dozen tallow-chandlers, then to a dozen blacksmiths, you will see tallow-chandlers are peculiar, and blacksmiths, too."

"You are a keen observer," said he of the jean cap, admiringly; "your remark is new to me; I dare say it is true."

"Course it is; and the stars have summat to do with it; for if they order a man's calling, it stands to reason that they order a man's mind to fit it. Now, a tailor sits on his board with others, and is always a-talking with 'em, and a-reading the news; therefore he thinks, as his fellows do, smart and sharp, bang up to the day, but nothing 'riginal and all his own like. But a cobbler," continued the man of leather, with a majestic air, "sits by hisself, and talks with hisself; and what he thinks gets into his head without being put there by another man's tongue."

"You enlighten me more and more," said our friend with the nose in the air, bowing respectfully. "A tailor is gregarious, a cobbler solitary. The gregarious go with the future, the solitary stick by the past. I understand why you are a Tory, and perhaps a poet."

"Well, a bit of one," said the Cobbler, with an iron smile. "And many's the cobbler who is a poet—or discovers marbellous things in a crystal—whereas a tailor, Sir" (spoken with great contempt), "only sees the upper-leather of the world's sole in a newspaper."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a sudden pressure of the crowd toward the theatre; the two young friends looked up, and saw that the new object of attraction was a little girl, who seemed scarcely ten years old, though in truth she was about two years older. She had just emerged from behind the curtain,

made her obeisance to the crowd, and was now walking in front of the stage with the prettiest possible air of infantine solemnity. "Poor little thing!" said Lionel. "Poor little thing!" said the Cobbler. And had you been there, my reader, ten to one but you would have said the same. And yet she was attired in white satin, with spangled flounce and a tinsel jacket; and she wore a wreath of flowers (to be sure, the flowers were not real) on her long fair curls, with gaudy bracelets (to be sure, the stones were mock) on her slender arms. Still there was something in her that all this finery could not vulgarize; and since it could not vulgarize, you pitied her for it. She had one of those charming faces that look straight into the hearts of us all, young and old. And though she seemed quite self-possessed, there was no effrontery in her air, but the ease of a little lady, with the simple unconsciousness of a child that there was any thing in her situation to induce you to sigh, "Poor thing!"

"You should see her act, young gents," said the Cobbler. "She plays uncommon. But if you had seen him as taught her—seen him a year ago."

"Who's that?"

"Waife, Sir. Mayhap you have heard speak of Waife?"

"I blush to say, no."

"Why, he might have made his fortune at Common Garden; but that's a long story. Poor fellow! he's broke down now, anyhow. But she takes care of him, little darling—God bless thee!" And the Cobbler here exchanged a smile and nod with the little girl, whose face brightened when she saw him amidst the crowd.

"By the brush and pallet of Raffaelle," cried the elder of the young men, "before I am many hours older I must have that child's head!"

"Her head, man!" cried the Cobbler, aghast.

"In my sketch-book. You are a poet—I a painter. You know the little girl?"

"Don't I! She and her grandfather lodge with me—her grandfather—that's Waife—marbellous man! But they ill-uses him; and if it wasn't for her, he'd starve. He fed them all once; he can feed them no longer—he'd starve. That's the world; they use up a genus, and when it falls on the road, push on; that's what Joe Spruce calls a-progressing. But there's the drum! they're a-going to act. Won't you look in, gents?"

"Of course," cried Lionel, "of course. And, hark ye, Vance, we'll toss up which shall be the first to take that little girl's head."

"Murderer in either sense of the word!" said Vance, with a smile that would have become Correggio if a tyro had offered to toss up which should be the first to paint a cherub.

CHAPTER II.

The Historian takes a view of the British Stage as represented by the Irregular Drama, the Regular having (ere the date of the events to which this narrative is restricted) disappeared from the Vestiges of Creation.

They entered the little theatre, and the Cobbler with them; but the last retired modestly to the threepenny row. The young gentlemen were favored with reserved seats, price one shilling. "Very dear," murmured Vance, as he carefully buttoned the pocket to which he restored a purse woven from links of steel, after the fashion of chain mail. Ah, *Messieurs* and *Confrères*, the dramatic authors, do not flatter yourselves that we are about to give you a complacent triumph over the Grand Melodrame of "The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." We grant it was horrible rubbish, regarded in an æsthetic point of view, but it was mightily effective in the theatrical. Nobody yawned; you did not even hear a cough, nor the cry of that omnipresent baby who is always sure to set up a *Vagitus ingens*, or unappeasable wail, in the midmost interest of a classical five-act piece, represented for the first time on the metropolitan boards. Here the story rushed on *per fas aut nefas*, and the audience went with it. Certes, some man who understood the stage must have put the incidents together, and then left it to each illiterate histrio to find the words —words, my dear *confrères*, signify so little in an acting play. The movement is the thing. Grand secret! Analyze, practice it, and restore to grateful stars that lost Pleiad, the British Acting Drama.

Of course the Bandit was an ill-used and most estimable man. He had some mysterious rights to the Estate and Castle of the Remorseless Baron. That titled usurper, therefore, did all in his power to hunt the Bandit out in his fastnesses, and bring him to a bloody end. Here the interest centred itself in the Bandit's child, who, we need not say, was the little girl in the wreath and spangles, styled in the playbill "Miss Juliet Araminta Waife," and the incidents consisted in her various devices to foil the pursuit of the Baron and save her father. Some of these incidents were indebted to the Comic Muse, and kept the audience in a broad laugh. Her arch playfulness here was requisite. With what vivacity she duped the High Sheriff, who had the commands of his king to take the Bandit alive or dead, into the belief that the very Lawyer employed by the Baron was the criminal in disguise, and what pearly teeth she showed when the lawyer was seized and gagged; how dexterously she ascertained the weak point in the character of the "King's Lieutenant" (*jeune premier*), who was deputed by his royal master to aid the Remorseless Baron in trouncing the Bandit; how cunningly she learned that he was in love with the Baron's ward (*jeune amoreuse*), whom that unworthy noble intended to force into a marriage with himself on account of her fortune; how prettily she passed notes to and fro, the Lieutenant never suspecting that she was the Bandit's child, and at last got the King's soldier on her side, as the event proved. And oh how gayly, and with what mimic art, she stole into the Baron's castle, disguised herself as a witch, startled his conscience with revelations and predictions, frightened all the vassals with blue lights and chemical illusions, and venturing even into the usurper's own private chamber while that tyrant was tossing restless on the couch, over which hung his terrible sword, abstracted from his coffer the deeds that proved the better rights of the persecuted Bandit. Then, when he woke before she could escape with her

treasure, and pursued her with his sword, with what glee she apparently set herself on fire, and skipped out of the casement in an explosion of crackers. And when the drama approached its *dénouement*, when the Baron's men, and the royal officers of justice, had, despite all her arts, tracked the Bandit to the cave, in which, after various retreats, he lay hidden, wounded by shots, and bruised by a fall from a precipice—with what admirable by-play she hovered around the spot, with what pathos she sought to decoy away the pursuers—it was the sky-lark playing round the nest. And when all was vain—when, no longer to be deceived, the enemies sought to seize her, how mockingly she eluded them, bounded up the rock, and shook her slight finger at them in scorn. Surely she will save that estimable Bandit still! Now, hitherto, though the Bandit was the nominal hero of the piece, though you were always hearing of him—his wrongs, virtues, hair-breadth escapes—he had never been seen. Not Mrs. Harris, in the immortal narrative, was more quoted and more mythical. But in the last scene there *was* the Bandit, there in his cavern, helpless with bruises and wounds, lying on a rock. In rushed the enemies, Baron, High Sheriff, and all, to seize him. Not a word spoke the Bandit, but his attitude was sublime—even Vance cried "Bravo;" and just as he is seized, halter round his neck, and about to be hanged, down from the chasm above leaps his child, holding the title-deeds, filched from the Baron, and by her side the King's Lieutenant, who proclaims the Bandit's pardon, with due restoration to his honors and estates, and consigns, to the astounded Sheriff, the august person of the Remorseless Baron. Then the affecting scene, father and child in each other's arms; and then an exclamation, which had been long hovering about the lips of many of the audience, broke out, "Waife, Waife!" Yes, the Bandit, who appeared but in the last scene, and even then uttered not a word, was the once great actor on that itinerant Thespian stage, known through many a Fair for his exuberant humor, his impromptu jokes, his arch eye, his redundant life of drollery, and the strange pathos or dignity with which he could suddenly exalt a jester's part, and call forth tears in the startled hush of laughter; he whom the Cobbler had rightly said, "might have made a fortune at Covent Garden." There was the remnant of the old popular mime!—all his attributes of eloquence reduced to dumb show! Masterly touch of nature and of art in this representation of him—touch which all, who had ever in former years seen and heard him on that stage, felt simultaneously. He came in for his personal portion of dramatic tears. "Waife, Waife!" cried many a village voice, as the little girl led him to the front of the stage. He hobbled; there was a bandage round his eyes. The plot, in describing the accident that had befallen the Bandit, idealized the genuine infirmities of the man—infirmities that had befallen him since last seen in that village. He was blind of one eye; he had become crippled; some malady of the trachea or larynx had seemingly broken up the once joyous key of the old pleasant voice. He did not trust himself to speak, even on that stage, but silently bent his head to the rustic audience; and Vance, who was an habitual play-goer, saw in that simple salutation that the man was an artistic actor. All was over, the audience streamed out affected, and talking one to the other. It had not been at all like the ordinary stage-exhibitions at a village Fair. Vance and Lionel stared at each other in surprise, and then, by a common impulse, moved toward the stage, pushed aside the curtain, which had fallen, and were in that strange world which has so many reduplications, fragments of one broken mirror, whether in the proudest theatre, or the lowliest barn—nay, whether in the palace of kings, the cabinet of statesmen, the home of domestic life—the world we call "Behind the Scenes."

CHAPTER III.

Striking illustrations of lawless tyranny and infant avarice exemplified in the social conditions of Great Britain.—Superstitions of the Dark Ages still in force among the Trading Community, furnishing valuable hints to certain American journalists, and highly suggestive of reflections humiliating to the national vanity.

The Remorseless Baron, who was no other than the managerial proprietor of the stage, was leaning against a side-scene, with a pot of porter in his hand. The King's Lieutenant might be seen on the background, toasting a piece of cheese on the point of his loyal sword. The Bandit had crept into a corner, and the little girl was clinging to him fondly, as his hand was stroking her fair hair. Vance looked round, and approached the Bandit—"Sir, allow me to congratulate you; your bow was admirable. I have never seen John Kemble—before my time; but I shall fancy I have seen him now—seen him on the night of his retirement from the stage. As to your grandchild, Miss Juliet Araminta, she is a perfect chrysolite."

Before Mr. Waife could reply, the Remorseless Baron stepped up in a spirit worthy of his odious and arbitrary character. "What do you do here, Sir? I allow no gents behind the scenes earwigging my people."

"I beg pardon respectfully: I am an artist—a pupil of the Royal Academy; I should like to make a sketch of Miss Juliet Araminta."

"Sketch! nonsense."

"Sir," said Lionel, with the seasonable extravagance of early youth, "my friend would, I am sure, pay for the sitting—handsomely!"

"Ha!" said the manager, softened, "you speak like a gentleman, Sir; but, Sir, Miss Juliet Araminta is under my protection—in fact, she is my property. Call and speak to me about it to-morrow, before the first performance begins, which is twelve o'clock. Happy to see any of your friends in the reserved seats. Busy now, and—and—in short—excuse me—servant, Sir—servant, Sir."

The Baron's manner left no room for further parley. Vance bowed, smiled, and retreated. But, meanwhile, his young friend had seized the opportunity to speak both to Waife and his grandchild; and when Vance took his arm and drew him away, there was a puzzled, musing expression on Lionel's face, and he remained silent till they had got through the press of such stragglers as still loitered before the stage, and were in a quiet corner of the sward. Stars and moon were then up—a lovely summer night.

"What on earth are you thinking of, Lionel? I have put to you three questions, and you have not answered one."

"Vance," answered Lionel, slowly, "the oddest thing! I am so disappointed in that little girl—greedy and mercenary!"

"Precocious villain! how do you know that she is greedy and mercenary?"

"Listen: when that surly old manager came up to you, I said something—civil, of course—to Waife, who answered in a hoarse, broken voice, but in very good language. Well, when I told the manager that you would pay for the sitting, the child caught hold of my arm hastily, pulled me down to her own height, and whispered, 'How much will he give?' Confused by a question so point-blank, I answered at random, 'I don't know; ten shillings, perhaps.' You should have seen her face!"

"Seen her face! radiant, I should think so. Too much by half!" exclaimed Vance. "Ten shillings! spendthrift!"

"Too much! she looked as you might look if one offered you ten shillings for your picture of 'Julius Cæsar considering whether he should cross the Rubicon.' But when the manager had declared her to be his property, and appointed you to call to-morrow—implying that *he* was to be paid for allowing her to sit—her countenance became overcast, and she muttered, sullenly, 'I'll not sit; I'll not!' Then she turned to her grandfather, and something very quick and close was whispered between the two; and she pulled me by the sleeve, and said in my ear—oh, but so eagerly!—'I want three pounds; oh, three pounds! if he would give three pounds! And come to our lodgings—Mr. Merle, Willow Lane. Three pounds—three!' And with those words hissing in my ear, and coming from that fairy mouth, which ought to drop pearls and diamonds, I left her," added Lionel, as gravely as if he were sixty, "and lost an illusion."

"Three pounds!" cried Vance, raising his eyebrows to the highest arch of astonishment, and lifting his nose in the air toward the majestic moon—"three pounds! a fabulous sum! Who has three pounds to throw away? Dukes, with a hundred thousand a year in acres, have not three pounds to draw out of their pockets in that reckless, profligate manner. Three pounds! what could I not buy for three pounds? I could buy the Dramatic Library, bound in calf, for three pounds; I could buy a dress-coat for three pounds (silk lining not included); I could be lodged for a month for three pounds! And a jade in tinsel, just entering on her teens, to ask three pounds for what? for becoming immortal on the canvas of Francis Vance? bother!"

Here Vance felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned round quickly, as a man out of temper does under similar circumstances, and beheld the swart face of the Cobbler.

"Well, master, did not she act fine?—how d'ye like her?"

"Not much in her natural character; but she sets a mighty high value on herself."

"Anan, I don't take you."

"She'll not catch me taking her! Three pounds!—three kingdoms."

"Stay," cried Lionel to the Cobbler; "did not you say she lodged with you? Are you Mr. Merle?"

"Merle's my name, and she do lodge with me—Willow Lane."

"Come this way, then, a few yards down the road—more quiet. Tell me what the child means, if you can?" and Lionel related the offer of his friend, the reply of the manager, and the grasping avarice of Miss Juliet Araminta.

The Cobbler made no answer; and when the young friends, surprised at his silence, turned to look at him, they saw he was wiping his eyes with his sleeve.

"Poor little thing!" he said at last, and still more pathetically than he had uttered the same words at her appearance in front of the stage; "'tis all for her grandfather, I guess—I guess."

"Oh," cried Lionel, joyfully, "I am so glad to think that. It alters the whole case, you see, Vance."

"It don't alter the case of the three pounds," grumbled Vance. "What's her grandfather to me, that I should give his grandchild three pounds, when any other child in the village would have leaped out of her skin to have her face upon my sketch-book and five shillings in her pocket. Hang her grandfather!"

They were now in the main road. The Cobbler seated himself on a lonely milestone, and looked first at one of the faces before him, then at the other; that of Lionel seemed to attract him the most, and in speaking it was Lionel whom he addressed.

"Young master," he said, "it is now just four years ago when Mr. Rugge, coming here, as he and his troop had done at Fair-time ever sin' I can mind of, brought with him the man you have seen to-night, William Waife; I calls him Gentleman Waife. However that man fell into such straits—how he came to join such a carawan would puzzle most heads. It puzzles Joe Spruce uncommon; it don't puzzle me."

"Why?" asked Vance.

"Cos of Saturn!"

"Satan?"

"Saturn—dead agin his Second and Tenth House, I'll swear. Lord of ascendant, mayhap in combustion of the sun—who knows?"

"You're not an astrologer?" said Vance, suspiciously edging off.

"Bit of it—no offense."

"What does it signify?" said Lionel, impatiently; "go on. So you called Mr. Waife, 'Gentleman Waife;' and if you had not been an astrologer you would have been puzzled to see him in such a calling."

"Ay, that's it; for he warn't like any as we ever see on these boards hereabouts; and yet he warn't exactly like a Lunnon actor, as I've seen 'em in Lunnon, either, but more like a clever fellow who acted for the spree of the thing. He had such droll jests, and looked so comical, yet not commonlike, but always what I calls a gentleman—just as if one o' ye two were doing a bit of sport to please your friends. Well, he drew hugely, and so he did, every time he came, so that the great families in the neighborhood would go to hear him; and he lodged in my house, and had pleasant ways with him, and was what I call a scollard. But still I don't want to deceive ye, and I should judge him to have been a wild dog in his day. Mercury ill-aspected—not a doubt of it. Last year it so happened that one of the great gents who be-

long to a Lunnon theatre was here at Fair-time. Whether he had heard of Waife chanceways, and come express to judge for hisself, I can't say; like eno'. And when he had seen Gentleman Waife act, he sent for him to the inn—Red Lion—and offered him a power o' money to go to Lunnon—Common Garden. Well, Sir, Waife did not take to it all at once, but hemmed and hawed, and was at last quite coaxed into it; and so he went. But bad luck came on it; and I knew there would, for I saw it all in my crystal."

"Oh!" exclaimed Vance, "a crystal, too; really it is getting late, and if you had your crystal about you, you might see that we want to sup."

"What happened?" asked Lionel, more blandly, for he saw the Cobbler, who had meant to make a great effect by the introduction of the crystal, was offended.

"What happened? why, just what I foreseed. There was an accident in the railway 'tween this and Lunnon, and poor Waife lost an eye, and was a cripple for life—so he could not go on the Lunnon stage at all; and what was worse, he was a long time atwixt life and death, and got summat bad on his chest wi' catching cold, and lost his voice, and became the sad object you have gazed on, young, happy things that ye are."

"But he got some compensation from the railway, I suppose?" said Vance, with the unfeeling equanimity of a stoical demon.

"He did, and spent it. I suppose the gentleman broke out in him as soon as he had money, and ill though he was, the money went. Then it seems he had no help for it but to try and get back to Mr. Rugge. But Mr. Rugge was sore and spiteful at his leaving; for Rugge counted on him, and had even thought of taking the huge theatre at York, and bringing out Gentleman Waife as his trump card. But it warn't fated, and Rugge thought himself ill-used, and so at first he would have nothing more to say to Waife. And truth is, what could the poor man do for Rugge? But then Waife produces little Sophy."

"You mean Juliet Araminta?" said Vance.

"Same—in private life she be Sophy. And Waife taught her to act, and put together the plays for her. And Rugge caught at her; and she supports Waife with what she gets; for Rugge only gives him four shillings a week, and that goes on 'baccy and suchlike."

"Suchlike—drink, I presume!" said Vance.

"No—he don't drink. But he do smoke; and he has little genteel ways with him, and four shillings goes on 'em. And they have been about the country this spring, and done well, and now they be here. But Rugge behaves shocking hard to both on 'em; and I don't believe he has any right to her in law, as he pretends—only a sort of understanding which she and her grandfather could break if they pleased; and that's what they wish to do, and that's why little Sophy wants the three pounds."

"How!" cried Lionel, eagerly. "If they had three pounds, could they get away? and if they did, how could they live? Where could they go?"

"That's their secret. But I heard Waife say—the first night they came here—'that if he could get three pounds, he had hit on a plan to be independent like.' I tell you what put his back up: it was Rugge insisting on his coming on the stage again, for he did not like to be seen such a wreck. But he was forced to give in; and so he contrived to cut up that play-story, and appear hisself at the last without speaking."

"My good friend," cried young Lionel, "we are greatly obliged to you for your story—and we should much like to see little Sophy and her grandfather at your house to-morrow—can we?"

"Certain sure you can—after the play's over; to-night, if you like."

"No, to-morrow; you see my friend is impatient to get back now—we will call to-morrow."

"'Tis the last day of their stay," said the Cobbler. "But you can't be sure to see them safely at my house afore ten o'clock at night—and not a word to Rugge! mum!"

"Not a word to Rugge," returned Lionel; "good-night to you."

The young men left the Cobbler still seated on the milestone, gazing on the stars and ruminating. They walked briskly down the road.

"It is I who have had the talk now," said Lionel, in his softest tone. He was bent on coaxing three pounds out of his richer friend, and that might require some management. For among the wild youngsters in Mr. Vance's profession, there ran many a joke at the skill with which he parried irregular assaults on his purse; and that gentleman, with his nose more than usually in the air, having once observed to such scoffers "that they were quite welcome to any joke at his expense"—a wag had exclaimed, "At your expense! Don't fear; if a joke were worth a farthing, you would never give that permission."

So when Lionel made that innocent remark, the softness of his tone warned the artist of some snake in the grass—and he prudently remained silent. Lionel, in a voice still sweeter, repeated, "It is I who have all the talk now!"

"Naturally," then returned Vance, "naturally you have, for it is you, I suspect, who alone have the intention to pay for it, and three pounds appear to be the price. Dearish, eh?"

"Ah, Vance, if I had three pounds!"

"Tush! and say no more till we have supped. I have the hunger of a wolf."

Just in sight of the next milestone the young travelers turned a few yards down a green lane, and reached a small inn on the banks of the Thames. Here they had sojourned for the last few days, sketching, boating, roaming about the country from sunrise, and returning to supper and bed at nightfall. It was the pleasantest little inn—an arbor, covered with honey-suckle, between the porch and the river—a couple of pleasure-boats moored to the bank; and now all the waves rippling under moonlight.

"Supper and lights in the arbor," cried Vance to the waiting-maid, "hey, presto—quick! while we turn in to wash our hands. And harkye, a quart jug of that capital whisky-toddy."

CHAPTER IV.

Being a chapter that links the Past to the Future by the gradual elucidation of Antecedents.

O WAYSIDE inns, pedestrian rambles! O summer nights, under honey-suckle arbors, on the banks of starry waves! O Youth, Youth!

Vance ladled out the toddy and lighted his cigar, then, leaning his head on his hand, and his elbow on the table, he looked with an artist's eye along the glancing river.

"After all," said he, "I am glad I am a painter; and I hope I may live to be a great one."

"No doubt, if you live, you will be a great one," cried Lionel, with cordial sincerity. "And if I, who can only just paint well enough to please myself, find that it gives a new charm to nature—"

"Cut sentiment," quoth Vance, "and go on."

"What," continued Lionel, unchilled by the admonitory interruption, "must you feel who can fix a fading sunshine—a fleeting face—on a scrap of canvas, and say, 'Sunshine and Beauty, live *there* forever!'"

Vance. "Forever! no! Colors perish, canvas rots. What remains to us of Zeuxis? Still it is prettily said on behalf of the poetic side of the profession; there is a prosaic one—we'll blink it. Yes; I am glad to be a painter. But you must not catch the fever of my calling. Your poor mother would never forgive me if she thought I had made you a dauber by my example."

Lionel (gloomily). "No. I shall not be a painter! But what can I be? How shall I ever build on the earth one of the castles I have built in the air? Fame looks so far—Fortune so impossible! But one thing I am bent upon" (speaking with knit brow and clenched teeth), "I will gain an independence somehow, and support my mother."

Vance. "Your mother is supported—she has the pension—"

Lionel. "Of a captain's widow; and" (he added, with a flushed cheek) "a first floor that she lets to lodgers!"

Vance. "No shame in that! Peers let houses; and on the Continent, princes let not only first floors, but fifth and sixth floors, to say nothing of attics and cellars. In beginning the world, friend Lionel, if you don't wish to get chafed at every turn, fold up your pride carefully, put it under lock and key, and only let it out to air upon grand occasions. Pride is a garment all stiff brocade outside, all grating sackcloth on the side next to the skin. Even kings don't wear the dalmaticum except at a coronation. Independence you desire; good. But are you dependent now? Your mother has given you an excellent education, and you have already put it to profit. My dear boy," added Vance, with unusual warmth, "I honor you, at your age, on leaving school, to have shut yourself up, translated Greek and Latin per sheet for a bookseller at less than a valet's wages, and all for the purpose of buying comforts for your mother; and having a few pounds in your own pockets, to rove your little holiday with me, and pay your share of the costs! Ah, there are energy and spirit and life in all that, Lionel, which will found upon rock some castle as fine as any you have built in air. Your hand, my boy."

This burst was so unlike the practical dryness, or even the more unctuous humor, of Frank Vance, that it took Lionel by surprise, and his voice faltered as he pressed the hand held out to him. He answered, "I don't deserve your praise, Vance, and I fear the pride you tell me to put under lock and key, has the larger share of the merit you ascribe to better motives. Independent? No! I have never been so."

Vance. "Well, you depend on a parent—who, at seventeen, does not?"

Lionel. "I did not mean my mother; of course, I could not be too proud to take benefits from her. But the truth is simply this: my father had a relation, not very near, indeed—a cousin, at about as distant a remove, I fancy, as a cousin well can be. To this gentleman my mother wrote when my poor father died—and he was generous, for it is he who paid for my schooling. I did not know this till very lately. I had a vague impression, indeed, that I had a powerful and wealthy kinsman who took interest in me, but whom I had never seen."

Vance. "Never seen?"

Lionel. "No. And here comes the sting. On leaving school last Christmas, my mother, for the first time, told me the extent of my obligations to this benefactor, and informed me that he wished to know my own choice as to a profession—that if I preferred Church or Bar, he would maintain me at college."

Vance. "Body o' me! where's the sting in that? Help yourself to toddy, my boy, and take more genial views of life."

Lionel. "You have not heard me out. I then asked to see my benefactor's letters; and my mother, unconscious of the pain she was about to inflict, showed me not only the last one, but all she had received from him. Oh, Vance, they were terrible, those letters! The first began by a dry acquiescence in the claims of kindred—a curt proposal to pay my schooling, but not one word of kindness, and a stern proviso that the writer was never to see nor hear from me. He wanted no gratitude—he disbelieved in all professions of it. His favors would cease if I molested him. 'Molested' was the word; it was bread thrown to a dog."

Vance. "Tut! Only a rich man's eccentricity. A bachelor, I presume?"

Lionel. "My mother says he has been married, and is a widower."

Vance. "Any children?"

Lionel. "My mother says none living; but I know little or nothing about his family."

Vance looked with keen scrutiny into the face of his boy-friend, and, after a pause, said, dryly —"Plain as a pikestaff. Your relation is one of those men who, having no children, suspect and dread the attention of an heir-presumptive; and what has made this sting, as you call it, keener to you, is—pardon me—is in some silly words of your mother, who, in showing you the letters, has hinted to you that that heir you might be, if you were sufficiently pliant and subservient. Am I not right?"

Lionel hung his head, without reply.

Vance (cheeringly). "So, so; no great harm as yet. Enough of the first letter. What was the last?"

Lionel. "Still more offensive. He, this kinsman, this patron, desired my mother to spare him those references to her son's ability and promise, which, though natural to herself, had slight interest to him—him, the condescending benefactor!—As to his opinion, what could I care for the opinion of one I had never seen? All that could sensibly affect my—oh, but I can

not go on with those cutting phrases, which imply but this, 'All I can care for is the money of a man who insults me while he gives it.'"

VANCE (emphatically). "Without being a wizard, I should say your relative was rather a disagreeable person—not what is called urbane and amiable—in fact, a brute."

LIONEL. "You will not blame me, then, when I tell you that I resolved not to accept the offer to maintain me at college, with which the letter closed. Luckily Dr. Wallis (the head-master of my school), who had always been very kind to me, had just undertaken to supervise a popular translation of the classics. He recommended me, at my request, to the publisher engaged in the undertaking, as not incapable of translating some of the less difficult Latin authors—subject to his corrections. When I had finished the first installment of the work thus intrusted to me, my mother grew alarmed for my health, and insisted on my taking some recreation. You were about to set out on a pedestrian tour. I had, as you say, some pounds in my pocket; and thus I have passed with you the merriest days of my life."

VANCE. "What said your civil cousin when your refusal to go to college was conveyed to him?"

LIONEL. "He did not answer my mother's communication to that effect till just before I left home, and then—no, it was not his last letter from which I repeated that withering extract—no, the *last* was more galling still, for in it he said, that if, in spite of the ability and promise that had been so vaunted, the dullness of a college and the labor of learned professions were so distasteful to me, he had no desire to dictate to my choice, but that as he did not wish one who was, however remotely, of his blood, and bore the name of Haughton, to turn shoeblack or pickpocket—Vance—Vance!"

VANCE. "Lock up your pride—the sackcloth frets you—and go on; and that therefore he—"

LIONEL. "Would buy me a commission in the army, or get me an appointment in India."

VANCE. "Which did you take?"

LIONEL (passionately). "Which! so offered—which?—of course neither! But, distrusting the tone of my mother's reply, I sat down, the evening before I left home, and wrote myself to this cruel man. I did not show my letter to my mother—did not tell her of it. I wrote, shortly—that, if he would not accept my gratitude, I would not accept his benefits; that shoeblack I might be—pickpocket, no! that he need not fear I should disgrace his blood or my name; and that I would not rest till, sooner or later, I had paid him back all that I had cost him, and felt relieved from the burdens of an obligation which—which—" The boy paused, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed.

Vance, though much moved, pretended to scold his friend, but finding that ineffectual, fairly rose, wound his arm brother-like round him, and drew him from the arbor to the shelving margin of the river. "Comfort," then said the Artist, almost solemnly, as here, from the inner depths of his character, the true genius of the man came forth and spoke—"Comfort, and look round; see where the islet interrupts the tide, and how smilingly the stream flows on. See, just where we stand, how the slight pebbles are fretting the wave—would the wave, if not fretted, make that pleasant music? A few miles farther on, and the river is spanned by a bridge, which busy feet now are crossing; by the side of that bridge now is rising a palace;—all the men who rule England have room in that palace. At the rear of the palace soars up the old Abbey, where kings have their tombs in right of the names they inherit: men lowly as we have found tombs there, in right of the names which they made. Think, now, that you stand on that bridge with a boy's lofty hope, with a man's steadfast courage; then turn again to that stream, calm with starlight, flowing on toward the bridge—spite of islet and pebbles."

Lionel made no audible answer, though his lips murmured, but he pressed closer and closer to his friend's side; and the tears were already dried on his cheek—though their dew still glistened in his eyes.

CHAPTER V.

Speculations on the moral qualities of the Bandit.—Mr. Vance, with mingled emotions, foresees that the acquisition of the Bandit's acquaintance may be attended with pecuniary loss.

VANCE loosened the boat from its moorings, stepped in, and took up the oars. Lionel followed, and sate by the stern. The Artist rowed on slowly, whistling melodiously in time to the dash of the oars. They soon came to the bank of garden-ground surrounded with turf, on which fairies might have danced—one of those villas never seen out of England. From the windows of the villa the lights gleamed steadily; over the banks, dipping into the water, hung large willows breathlessly; the boat gently brushed aside their pendant boughs, and Vance rested in a grassy cove.

And "Faith," said the Artist, gayly—"Faith," said he, lighting his third cigar, "it is time we should bestow a few words more on the Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child! What a cock-and-a-bull story the Cobbler told us! He must have thought us precious green."

LIONEL (roused). "Nay, I see nothing so wonderful in the story, though much that is sad. You must allow that Waife may have been a good actor—you became quite excited merely at his attitude and bow. Natural, therefore, that he should have been invited to try his chance on the London stage—not improbable that he may have met with an accident by the train, and so lost his chance forever—natural, then, that he should press into service his poor little grandchild—natural, also, that, hardly treated, and his pride hurt, he should wish to escape."

VANCE. "And more natural than all, that he should want to extract from our pockets three pounds—the Bandit! No, Lionel, I tell you what is not probable, that he should have disposed of that clever child to a vagabond like Rugge—she plays admirably. The manager who was to have engaged him would have engaged her if he had seen her. I am puzzled."

LIONEL. "True, she is an extraordinary child. I can not say how she has interested me." He took out his purse and began counting its contents. "I have nearly three pounds left," he

cried, joyously. "£2 18*s.* if I give up the thought of a longer excursion with you, and go quietly home."

VANCE. "And not pay your share of the bill yonder?"

LIONEL. "Ah, I forgot that! But come, I am not too proud to borrow from you, and it is not for a selfish purpose."

VANCE. "Borrow from me, Cato! That comes of falling in with bandits and their children. No, but let us look at the thing like men of sense. One story is good till another is told. I will call by myself on Rugge to-morrow, and hear what he says; and then, if we judge favorably to the Cobbler's version, we will go at night and talk with the Cobbler's lodgers; and I daresay," added Vance, kindly, but with a sigh—"I daresay the three pounds will be coaxed out of me! After all, her head is worth it. I want an idea for Titania."

LIONEL (joyously). "My dear Vance, you are the best fellow in the world."

VANCE. "Small compliment to human-kind. Take the oars—it is your turn now."

Lionel obeyed; the boat once more danced along the tide—thoro' reeds, thoro' waves, skirting the grassy islet—out into pale moonlight. They talked but by fits and starts. What of?—a thousand things. Bright young hearts, eloquent young tongues! No sins in the past; hopes gleaming through the future. Oh summer nights, on the glass of starry waves! Oh Youth, Youth!

CHAPTER VI.

Wherein the Historian tracks the Public Characters that fret their hour on the stage, into the bosom of private life.—The reader is invited to arrive at a conclusion which may often, in periods of perplexity, restore ease to his mind; viz., that if man will reflect on all the hopes he has nourished, all the fears he has admitted, all the projects he has formed, the wisest thing he can do, nine times out of ten, with hope, fear, and project, is to let them end with the chapter—in smoke.

IT was past nine o'clock in the evening of the following day. The exhibition at Mr. Rugge's theatre had closed for the season in that village, for it was the conclusion of the Fair. The final performance had been begun and ended somewhat earlier than on former nights. The theatre was to be cleared from the ground by daybreak, and the whole company to proceed onward betimes in the morning. Another Fair awaited them in an adjoining county, and they had a long journey before them.

Gentleman Waife and his Juliet Araminta had gone to their lodgings over the Cobbler's stall. The rooms were homely enough, but had an air not only of the comfortable, but the picturesque. The little sitting-room was very old-fashioned—paneled in wood that had once been painted blue—with a quaint chimney-piece that reached to the ceiling. That part of the house spoke of the time of Charles I. It might have been tenanted by a religious Roundhead; and framed-in over the low door there was a grim faded portrait of a pinched-faced saturnine man, with long lank hair, starched band, and a length of upper-lip that betokened relentless obstinacy of character, and might have curled in sullen glee at the monarch's scaffold, or preached an interminable sermon to the stout Protector. On a table, under the deep-sunk window, were neatly arrayed a few sober-looking old books; you would find among them *Colley's Astrology*, *Owen Feltham's Resolves*, *Glanville on Witches*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, an early edition of *Paradise Lost*, and an old Bible; also two flower-pots of clay brightly reddened, and containing stocks; also two small worsted rugs, on one of which rested a carved cocoa-nut, on the other an egg-shaped ball of crystal—that last the pride and joy of the Cobbler's visionary soul. A door left wide open communicated with an inner room (very low was its ceiling), in which the Bandit slept, if the severity of his persecutors permitted him to sleep. In the corner of the sitting-room, near that door, was a small horse-hair sofa, which, by the aid of sheets and a needlework coverlid, did duty for a bed, and was consigned to the Bandit's child. Here the tenderness of the Cobbler's heart was visible, for over the coverlid were strewed sprigs of lavender, and leaves of vervain—the last, be it said, to induce happy dreams, and scare away witchcraft and evil spirits. On another table, near the fire-place, the child was busied in setting out the tea-things for her grandfather. She had left in the property-room of the theatre her robe of spangles and tinsel, and appeared now in a simple frock. She had no longer the look of Titania, but that of a lively, active, affectionate human child; nothing theatrical about her now, yet still, in her graceful movements, so nimble but so noiseless, in her slight fair hands, in her transparent coloring, there was Nature's own lady—that *something* which strikes us all as well-born and high-bred; not that it necessarily is so—the semblances of aristocracy, in female childhood more especially, are often delusive. The *souvenance* flower wrought into the collars of princes springs up wild on field and fell.

Gentleman Waife, wrapped negligently in a gray dressing-gown, and seated in an old leathern easy-chair, was evidently out of sorts. He did not seem to heed the little preparations for his comfort, but, resting his cheek on his right hand, his left drooped on his crossed knees—an attitude rarely seen in a man when his heart is light and his spirits high. His lips moved—he was talking to himself. Though he had laid aside his theatrical bandage over both eyes, he wore a black patch over one, or rather where one had been; the eye exposed was of singular beauty, dark and brilliant. For the rest, the man had a striking countenance, rugged, and rather ugly than otherwise, but by no means unprepossessing; full of lines and wrinkles and strong muscle, with large lips of wondrous pliancy, and an aspect of wistful sagacity, that, no doubt, on occasion could become exquisitely comic—dry comedy—the comedy that makes others roar when the comedian himself is as grave as a judge.

You might see in his countenance, when quite in its natural repose, that Sorrow had passed by there; yet the instant the countenance broke into play, you would think that Sorrow must have been sent about her business as soon as the respect due to that visitor, so accustomed to have her own way, would permit. Though the man was old, you could not call him aged.

One-eyed and crippled, still, marking the muscular arm, the expansive chest, you would have scarcely called him broken or infirm. And hence there was a certain indescribable pathos in his whole appearance, as if Fate had branded, on face and form, characters in which might be read her agencies on career and mind—plucked an eye from intelligence, shortened one limb for life's progress, yet left whim sparkling out in the eye she had spared, and a light heart's wild spring in the limb she had maimed not.

"Come, Grandy, come," said the little girl, coaxingly; "your tea will get quite cold; your toast is ready, and here is such a nice egg—Mr. Merle says you may be sure it is new laid. Come, don't let that hateful man fret you; smile on your own Sophy—come."

"If"—said Mr. Waife, in a hollow undertone—"if I were alone in the world."

"Oh! Grandy."

"'I know a spot on which a bed-post grows,
And do remember where a roper lives.'

Delightful prospect, not to be indulged; for if I were in peace at one end of the rope, what would chance to my Sophy, left forlorn at the other?"

"Don't talk so, or I shall think you are sorry to have taken care of me."

"Care of thee, O child! and what care? It is thou who takest care of me. Put thy hands from my mouth; sit down, darling, there, opposite, and let us talk. Now, Sophy, thou hast often said that thou wouldst be glad to be out of this mode of life even for one humbler and harder: think well—is it so?"

"Oh! yes, indeed, grandfather."

"No more tinsel dresses and flowery wreaths; no more applause; no more of the dear divine stage excitement; the heroine and fairy vanished; only a little commonplace child in dingy gingham, with a purblind cripple for thy sole charge and playmate; Juliet Araminta evaporated evermore into little Sophy!"

"It would be so nice!" answered little Sophy, laughing merrily.

"What would make it nice?" asked the comedian, turning on her his solitary piercing eye, with curious interest in his gaze.

Sophy left her seat, and placed herself on a stool at her grandfather's knee; on that knee she clasped her tiny hands, and shaking aside her curls, looked into his face with confident fondness. Evidently these two were much more than grandfather and grandchild—they were *friends*, they were equals, they were in the habit of consulting and prattling with each other. She got at his meaning, however covert his humor; and he to the core of her heart, through its careless babble. Between you and me, Reader, I suspect that, in spite of the comedian's sagacious wrinkles, the one was as much a child as the other.

"Well," said Sophy, "I will tell you, Grandy, what would make it nice—no one would vex and affront you, we should be all by ourselves; and then, instead of those nasty lamps, and those dreadful painted creatures, we could go out and play in the fields, and gather daisies; and I could run after butterflies, and when I am tired I should come here, where I am now, any time of the day, and you would tell me stories and pretty verses, and teach me to write a little better than I do now, and make such a wise little woman of me; and if I wore gingham, but it need not be dingy, Grandy, it would be all mine, and you would be all mine too, and we'd keep a bird, and you'd teach it to sing; and oh, would it not be nice!"

"But, still, Sophy, we should have to live, and we could not live upon daisies and butterflies. And I can't work now—for the matter of that, I never could work—more shame for me, but so it is. Merle says the fault is in the stars—with all my heart. But the stars will not go to the jail or the workhouse instead of me. And though they want nothing to eat, we do."

"But Grandy, you have said every day since the first walk you took after coming here, that if you had three pounds, we could get away and live by ourselves, and make a fortune!"

"A fortune—that's a strong word; let it stand. A fortune! But still, Sophy, though we should be free of this thrice execrable Rugge, the scheme I have in my head lies remote from daisies and butterflies. We should have to dwell in towns, and exhibit!"

"On a stage, Grandy?" said Sophy, resigned but sorrowful.

"No, not exactly—a room would do."

"And I should not wear those horrid, horrid dresses, nor mix with those horrid, horrid painted people?"

"No."

"And we should be quite alone, you and I?"

"Hum! there would be a third."

"Oh, Grandy, Grandy!" cried Sophy, in a scream of shrill alarm. "I know—I know; you are thinking of joining us with the Pig-faced Lady!"

MR. WAIFE (not a muscle relaxed). "A well-spoken and pleasing gentlewoman. But no such luck; three pounds would not buy her."

SOPHY. "I am glad of that; I don't care so much for the Mermaid—she's dead and stuffed. But, oh" (another scream), "perhaps 'tis the Spotted Boy!"

MR. WAIFE. "Calm your sanguine imagination; you aspire too high! But this I will tell you, that our companion, whatsoever or whosoever that companion may be, will be one you will like."

"I don't believe it," said Sophy, shaking her head. "I only like you. But who is it?"

"Alas!" said Mr. Waife, "it is no use pampering ourselves with vain hopes; the three pounds are not forthcoming. You heard what that brute Rugge said, that the gentleman who wanted to take your portrait had called on him this morning, and offered 10*s.* for a sitting—that is, 5*s.* for you, 5*s.* for Rugge; and Rugge thought the terms reasonable."

"But I said I would not sit."

"And when you did say it, you heard Rugge's language to me—to you. And now we must think of packing up, and be off at dawn with the rest. And," added the comedian, coloring high, "I must again parade, to boors and clowns, this mangled form; again set myself out as a spectacle of bodily infirmity—man's last degradation. And this I have come to—I!"

"No, no, Grandy, it will not last long! we will get the three pounds. We have always

hoped on!—hope still! And besides, I am sure those gentlemen will come here to-night. Mr. Merle said they would, at ten o'clock. It is near ten now, and your tea cold as a stone."

She hung on his neck caressingly, kissing his furrowed brow, and leaving a tear there, and thus coaxed him till he set to quietly at his meal; and Sophy shared it, though she had no appetite in sorrowing for him—but to keep him company; that done, she lighted his pipe with the best canaster—his sole luxury and expense; but she always contrived that he should afford it.

Mr. Waife drew a long whiff, and took a more serene view of affairs. He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refuseth himself the softest consolation, next to that which comes from heaven. "What softer than woman?" whispers the young reader. Young reader, woman teases as well as consoles. Woman makes half the sorrows which she boasts the privilege to soothe. Woman consoles us, it is true, while we are young and handsome; when we are old and ugly, woman snubs and scolds us. On the whole, then, woman in this scale, the weed in that, Jupiter, hang out thy balance, and weigh them both; and if thou give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles thee—O Jupiter, try the weed!

CHAPTER VII.

The Historian, in pursuance of his stern duties, reveals to the scorn of future ages some of the occult practices which discredit the March of Light in the Nineteenth Century.

"May I come in?" asked the Cobbler outside the door.

"Certainly come in," said Gentleman Waife. Sophy looked wistfully at the aperture, and sighed to see that Merle was alone. She crept up to him.

"Will they not come?" she whispered.

"I hope so, pretty one; it ben't ten yet."

"Take a pipe, Merle," said Gentleman Waife, with a grand Comedian air.

"No, thank you kindly; I just looked in to ask if I could do any thing for ye, in case—in case ye must go to-morrow."

"Nothing; our luggage is small, and soon packed. Sophy has the money to discharge the meaner part of our debt to you."

"I don't value that," said the Cobbler, coloring.

"But we value your esteem," said Mr. Waife, with a smile that would have become a field-marshal. "And so, Merle, you think, if I am a broken-down vagrant, it must be put to the long account of the celestial bodies!"

"Not a doubt of it," returned the Cobbler, solemnly. "I wish you would give me date and place of Sophy's birth—that's what I want—I'd take her horryscope. I'm sure she'd be lucky."

"I'd rather not, please," said Sophy, timidly.

"Rather not?—very odd. Why?"

"I don't want to know the future."

"That is odder and odder," quoth the Cobbler, staring; "I never heard a girl say that afore."

"Wait till she's older, Mr. Merle," said Waife; "girls don't want to know the future till they want to be married."

"Summat in that," said the Cobbler. He took up the crystal. "Have you looked into this ball, pretty one, as I bade ye?"

"Yes, two or three times."

"Ha! and what did you see?"

"My own face made very long," said Sophy—"as long as *that*"—stretching out her hands.

The Cobbler shook his head dolefully, and, screwing up one eye, applied the other to the mystic ball.

Mr. Waife. "Perhaps you will see if those two gentlemen are coming."

Sophy. "Do, do! and if they will give us three pounds!"

The Cobbler (triumphantly). "Then you do care to know the future, after all?"

Sophy. "Yes, so far as that goes; but don't look any farther, pray."

The Cobbler (intent upon the ball, and speaking slowly, and in jerks). "A mist now. Ha! an arm with a besom—sweeps all before it."

Sophy (frightened).—"Send it away, please."

Cobbler. "It is gone. Ha! there's Rugge—looks very angry—savage, indeed."

Waife. "Good sign that! proceed."

Cobbler. "Shakes his fist; gone. Ha! a young man, boyish, dark hair."

Sophy (clapping her hands). "That is the young gentleman—the very young one, I mean—with the kind eyes; is he coming?—is he, is he?"

Waife. "Examine his pockets! do you see there three pounds?"

Cobbler (testily). "Don't be a interrupting. Ha! he is talking with another gentleman, bearded."

Sophy (whispering to her grandfather). "The old young gentleman."

Cobbler (putting down the crystal, and with great decision). "They *are* coming here; I see'd them at the corner of the lane, by the public-house, two minutes' walk to this door." He took out a great silver watch: "Look, Sophy, when the minute-hand gets there (or before, if they walk briskly), you will hear them knock."

Sophy clasped her hands in mute suspense, half-credulous, half-doubting; then she went and opened the room-door, and stood on the landing-place to listen.

Merle approached the Comedian, and said, in a low voice, "I wish for your sake she had the gift."

Waife. "The gift!—the three pounds!—so do I!"

Cobbler. "Pooh! worth a hundred times three pounds; *the* gift—the spirituous gift."

Waife. "Spirituous! don't like the epithet—smells of gin!"

Cobbler. "Spirituous gift to see in the crystal: if she had that, she might make your fortune."

Gentleman Waife (with a sudden change of countenance). "Ah! I never thought of that. But if she has not the gift, I could teach it her—eh?"

The Cobbler (indignantly). "I did not think to hear this from you, Mr. Waife. Teach her—you! make her an impostor, and of the wickedest kind, inventing lies between earth and them as dwell in the seven spheres! Fie! No, if she hasn't the gift natural, let her alone; what here is not heaven-sent, is devil-taught."

Waife (awed, but dubious). "Then you really think you saw all that you described, in that glass egg?"

Cobbler. "Think!—am I a liar? I spoke truth, and the proof is there!"—Rat-tat went the knocker at the door.

"The two minutes are just up," said the Cobbler; and Cornelius Agrippa could not have said it with more wizardly effect.

"They are come, indeed," said Sophy, reentering the room softly; "I hear their voices at the threshold."

The Cobbler passed by in silence, descended the stairs, and conducted Vance and Lionel into the Comedian's chamber; there he left them, his brow overcast. Gentleman Waife had displeased him sorely.

CHAPTER VIII.

Showing the arts by which a man, however high in the air Nature may have formed his nose, may be led by that nose, and in directions perversely opposite to those which, in following his nose, he might be supposed to take; and therefore, that nations the most liberally endowed with practical good sense, and in conceit thereof, carrying their noses the most horizontally aloof, when they come into conference with nations more skilled in diplomacy, and more practiced in "stage-play," end by the surrender of the precise object which it was intended they should surrender before they laid their noses together.

We all know that Demosthenes said, Every thing in oratory was acting—stage-play. Is it in oratory alone that the saying holds good? Apply it to all circumstances of life—"stage-play, stage-play, stage-play!"—only *ars est celare artem*, conceal the art. Gleesome in soul to behold his visitors, calculating already on the three pounds to be extracted from them, seeing in that hope the crisis in his own checkered existence, Mr. Waife rose from his seat in superb *upocrisia* or stage-play, and asked, with mild dignity—"To what am I indebted, gentlemen, for the honor of your visit?"

In spite of his nose, even Vance was taken aback. Pope says that Lord Bolingbroke had "the nobleman air." A great comedian Lord Bolingbroke surely was. But, ah, had Pope seen Gentleman Waife! Taking advantage of the impression he had created, the actor added, with the finest imaginable breeding—"But pray be seated;" and, once seeing them seated, resumed his easy-chair, and felt himself master of the situation.

"Hum!" said Vance, recovering his self-possession, after a pause—"hum!"

"Hem!" re-echoed Gentleman Waife; and the two men eyed each other much in the same way as Admiral Napier might have eyed the fort of Cronstadt, and the fort of Cronstadt have eyed Admiral Napier.

Lionel struck in with that youthful boldness which plays the deuce with all dignified, strategical science.

"You must be aware why we come, Sir; Mr. Merle will have explained. My friend, a distinguished artist, wished to make a sketch, if you do not object, of this young lady's very—"

"Pretty little face," quoth Vance, taking up the discourse. "Mr. Rugge, this morning, was willing—I understand that your grandchild refused. We are come here to see if she will be more complaisant under your own roof, or under Mr. Merle's, which, I take it, is the same thing for the present"—Sophy had sidled up to Lionel. He might not have been flattered if he knew why she preferred him to Vance. She looked on him as a boy—a fellow-child—and an instinct, moreover, told her, that more easily through him than his shrewd-looking, bearded guest could she attain the object of her cupidity—"three pounds!"

"Three pounds!" whispered Sophy, with the tones of an angel, into Lionel's thrilling ear.

Mr. Waife. "Sir, I will be frank with you." At that ominous commencement Mr. Vance recoiled, and mechanically buttoned his trowsers pocket. Mr. Waife noted the gesture with his one eye, and proceeded cautiously, feeling his way, as it were, toward the interior of the recess thus protected. "My grandchild declined your flattering proposal with my full approbation. She did not consider—neither did I—that the managerial rights of Mr. Rugge entitled him to the moiety of her face—off the stage." The Comedian paused, and with a voice, the mimic drollery of which no hoarseness could altogether mar, chanted the old line,

"'My face is my fortune, Sir,' she said."

Vance smiled—Lionel laughed; Sophy nestled still nearer to the boy.

Gentleman Waife (with pathos and dignity). "You see before you an old man; one way of life is the same to me as another. But she—do you think Mr. Rugge's stage the right place for her?"

Vance. "Certainly not. Why did you not introduce her to the London manager who would have engaged yourself?"

Waife could not conceal a slight change of countenance. "How do I know she would have succeeded? She had never then trod the boards. Besides, what strikes you as so good in a village show may be poor enough in a metropolitan theatre. Gentlemen, I did my best for her—you can not think otherwise, since she maintains me! I am no Œdipus, yet she is my Antigone."

Vance. "You know the classics, Sir. Mr. Merle said you were a scholar!—read Sophocles in his native Greek, I presume, Sir?"

Mr. Waife. "You jeer at the unfortunate; I am used to it."

Vance (confused). "I did not mean to wound you—I beg pardon. But your language and manner are not what—what one might expect to find in a—in a—Bandit persecuted by a remorseless Baron."

Mr. Waife. "Sir, you say you are an artist. Have you heard no tales of your professional brethren—men of genius the highest, who won fame which I never did, and failed of fortune as I have done? Their own fault, perhaps—improvidence, wild habits—ignorance of the way how to treat life and deal with their fellow-men; such fault may have been mine, too. I suffer for it; no matter—I ask none to save me. You are a painter—you would place her features on your canvas—you would have her rank among your own creations. She may become a part of your immortality. Princes may gaze on the effigies of the innocent, happy childhood, to which your colors lend imperishable glow. They may ask who and what was this fair creature?

Will you answer, 'One whom I found in tinsel, and so left, sure that she would die in rags!'—Save her!"

Lionel drew forth his purse, and poured its contents on the table. Vance covered them with his broad hand, and swept them into his own pocket! At that sinister action Waife felt his heart sink into his shoes; but his face was calm as a Roman's, only he resumed his pipe with a prolonged and testy whiff.

"It is I who am to take the portrait, and it is I who will pay for it," said Vance. "I understand that you have a pressing occasion for—" "Three pounds!" muttered Sophy, sturdily, through the tears which her grandfather's pathos had drawn forth from her downcast eyes — "Three pounds — three — three."

"You shall have them. But listen; I meant only to take a sketch—I must now have a finished portrait. I can not take this by candlelight. You must let me come here to-morrow; and yet to-morrow, I understand, you meant to leave?"

Waife. "If you will generously bestow on us the sum you say, we shall not leave the village till you have completed your picture. It is Mr. Rugge and his company we will leave."

Vance. "And may I venture to ask what you propose to do toward a new livelihood for yourself and your grandchild, by the help of a sum which is certainly much for *me* to pay—enormous, I might say, *quoad* me—but small for a capital whereon to set up a business?"

Waife. "Excuse me if I do not answer that very natural question at present. Let me assure you that that precise sum is wanted for an investment which promises her and myself an easy existence. But to insure my scheme I must keep it secret. Do you believe me?"

"I do!" cried Lionel; and Sophy, whom, by this time he had drawn upon his lap, put her arm gratefully round his neck.

"There is your money, Sir, beforehand," said Vance, declining downward his betrayed and resentful nose, and depositing three sovereigns on the table.

"And how do you know," said Waife, smiling, "that I may not be off to-night with your money and your model?"

"Well," said Vance, curtly, "I think it is on the cards. Still, as John Kemble said when rebuked for too large an alms,

> 'It is not often that I do these things,
> But when I do, I do them handsomely.'"

"Well applied, and well delivered, Sir," said the Comedian, "only you should put a little more emphasis on the word *do*."

"Did I not put enough? I am sure I felt it strongly; no one can feel the *do* more!"

Waife's pliant face relaxed into genial brightness—the *équivoque* charmed him. However, not affecting to comprehend it, he thrust back the money and said, "No, Sir—not a shilling till the picture is completed. Nay, to relieve your mind, I will own that, had I no scruple more delicate, I would rather receive nothing till Mr. Rugge is gone. True, he has no right to any share in it. But you see before you a man who, when it comes to arguing, could never take a wrangler's degree—never get over the Ass's Bridge, Sir. Plucked at it scores of times clean as a feather. But do not go yet. You came to give us money; give us what, were I rich, I should value more highly—a little of your time. You, Sir, are an artist; and you, young gentleman?" addressing Lionel.

Lionel (coloring). "I—am nothing as yet."

Waife. "You are fond of the drama, I presume, both of you. Apropos of John Kemble, you, Sir, said that you have never heard him. Allow me, so far as this cracked voice can do it, to give you a faint idea of him."

"I shall be delighted," said Vance, drawing nearer to the table, and feeling more at his ease. "But since I see you smoke, may I take the liberty to light my cigar?"

"Make yourself at home," said Gentleman Waife, with the good-humor of a fatherly host. And all the while Lionel and Sophy were babbling together, she still upon his lap.

Waife began his imitation of John Kemble. Despite the cracked voice it was admirable. One imitation drew on another; then succeeded anecdotes of the Stage, of the Senate, of the Bar. Waife had heard great orators, whom every one still admires for the speeches which nobody, nowadays, ever reads; he gave a lively idea of each. And then came sayings of dry humor, and odd scraps of worldly observation; and time flew on pleasantly till the clock struck twelve, and the young guests tore themselves away.

"Merle, Merle!" cried the Comedian, when they were gone.

Merle appeared.

"We don't go to-morrow. When Rugge sends for us (as he will do at daybreak), say so. You shall lodge us a few days longer, and then—and then—my little Sophy, kiss me, kiss me! You are saved at least from those horrid painted creatures!"

"Ah, ah," growled Merle from below, "he has got the money! Glad to hear it. But," he added, as he glanced at sundry weird and astrological symbols with which he had been diverting himself, "that's not it. The true horary question is, WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

CHAPTER IX.

The Historian shows that, notwithstanding the progressive spirit of the times, a Briton is not permitted, without an effort, "to progress" according to his own inclinations.

Sophy could not sleep. At first she was too happy. Without being conscious of any degradation in her lot among the itinerant artists of Mr. Rugge's exhibition (how could she, when her beloved and revered protector had been one of those artists for years?), yet, instinctively, she shrunk from their contact. Doubtless, while absorbed in some stirring part, she forgot companions, audience, all, and enjoyed what she performed—necessarily enjoyed, for her acting was really excellent, and where no enjoyment there no excellence; but when the histrionic enthusiasm was not positively at work, she crept to her grandfather with something between loathing and terror of the "painted creatures" and her own borrowed tinsel.

But more than all, she felt acutely every indignity or affront offered to Gentleman Waife. Heaven knows these were not few; and to escape from such a life—to be with her grandfather alone, have him all to herself to tend and to pet, to listen to, and to prattle with, seemed to her the consummation of human felicity. Ah, but should she be all alone? Just as she was lulling herself into a doze, that question seized and roused her. And then it was not happiness that kept her waking—it was what is less rare in the female breast—curiosity. Who was to be the mysterious third, to whose acquisition the three pounds were evidently to be devoted? What new face had she purchased by the loan of her own? Not the Pig-faced Lady, nor the Spotted Boy. Could it be the Norfolk Giant, or the Calf with Two Heads? Horrible idea! Monstrous phantasmagoria began to stalk before her eyes; and, to charm them away, with great fervor she fell to saying her prayers—an act of devotion which she had forgotten, in her excitement, to perform before resting her head on her pillow—but, could we peep into the soft spirit-world around us, we might find the omission not noted down in very dark characters by the recording angel.

That act over, her thoughts took a more comely aspect than had been worn by the preceding phantasies, reflected Lionel's kind looks, and repeated his gentle words. "Heaven bless him!" she said, with emphasis, as a supplement to the habitual prayers; and then tears gathered to her grateful eyelids, for she was one of those beings whose tears come slow from sorrow, quick from affection. And so the gray dawn found her still wakeful, and she rose, bathed her cheeks in the cold fresh water, and drew them forth with a glow like Hebe's. Dressing herself with the quiet activity which characterized all her movements, she then opened the casement and inhaled the air. All was still in the narrow lane, the shops yet unclosed. But on the still trees behind the shops the birds were beginning to stir and chirp. Chanticleer, from some neighboring yard, rung out his brisk *reveillée*. Pleasant English summer dawn in the pleasant English country village. She stretched her graceful neck far from the casement, trying to catch a glimpse of the blue river. She had seen its majestic flow on the day they had arrived at the fair, and longed to gain its banks; then her servitude to the stage forbade her. Now she was to be free! Oh, joy! Now she might have her careless hours of holiday; and, forgetful of Waife's warning that their vocation must be plied in towns, she let her fancy run riot amidst visions of green fields and laughing waters, and in fond delusion gathered the daisies and chased the butterflies. Changeling transferred into that lowest world of Art from the cradle of simple Nature, her human child's heart yearned for the human childlike delights. All children love the country, the flowers, the sward, the birds, the butterflies, or, if some do not, despair, oh, Philanthropy, of their after-lives!

She closed the window, smiling to herself, stole through the adjoining door-way, and saw that her grandfather was still asleep. Then she busied herself in putting the little sitting-room to rights, reset the table for the morning meal, watered the stocks, and, finally, took up the crystal and looked into it with awe, wondering why the Cobbler could see so much, and she only the distorted reflection of her own face. So interested, however, for once, did she become in the inspection of this mystic globe that she did not notice the dawn pass into broad daylight, nor hear a voice at the door below—nor, in short, take into cognition the external world, till a heavy tread shook the floor, and then, starting, she beheld the Remorseless Baron, with a face black enough to have darkened the crystal of Dr. Dee himself.

"Ho, ho!" said Mr. Rugge, in hissing accents, which had often thrilled the threepenny gallery with anticipative horror. "Rebellious, eh?—won't come? Where's your grandfather, baggage?"

Sophy let fall the crystal—a mercy it was not broken—and gazed vacantly on the Baron.

"Your vile scamp of a grandfather?"

Sophy (with spirit). "He is not vile. You ought to be ashamed of yourself speaking so, Mr. Rugge!"

Here, simultaneously, Mr. Waife hastily, endued in his gray dressing-gown, presented himself at the aperture of the bedroom door, and the Cobbler on the threshold of the sitting-room. The Comedian stood mute, trusting, perhaps, to the imposing effect of his attitude. The Cobbler, yielding to the impulse of untheatric man, put his head doggedly on one side, and, with both hands on his hips, said,

"Civil words to my lodgers, master, or out you go!"

The Remorseless Baron glared vindictively first at one, and then at the other; at length he strode up to Waife, and said, with a withering grin, "I have something to say to you; shall I say it before your landlord?"

The comedian waved his hand to the Cobbler.

"Leave us, my friend; I shall not require you. Step this way, Mr. Rugge." Rugge entered the bedroom, and Waife closed the door behind them.

"Anan," quoth the Cobbler, scratching his head. "I don't quite take your grandfather's giving in. British ground here! But your ascendant can not surely be in such malignant conjunction with that obstreperous tyrant as to bind you to him hand and foot. Let's see what the Crystal thinks of it. Take it up gently, and come down stairs with me."

"Please, no; I'll stay near grandfather," said Sophy, resolutely. "He shan't be left helpless with that rude man."

The Cobbler could not help smiling. "Lord love you," said he; "you have a spirit of your own, and, if you were my wife, I should be afraid of you. But I won't stand here eaves-dropping; mayhap your grandfather has secrets I'm not to hear; call me if I'm wanted." He descended. Sophy, with less noble disdain of eaves-dropping, stood in the centre of the room, holding her breath to listen. She heard no sound—she had half a mind to put her ear to the key-hole, but that seemed, even to her, a mean thing, if not absolutely required by the necessity of the case. So there she still stood, her head bent down, her finger raised: oh that Vance could have so painted her!

CHAPTER X.

Showing the causes why Men and Nations, when one Man or Nation wishes to get for its own arbitrary purposes what the other Man or Nation does not desire to part with, are apt to ignore the mild precepts of Christianity, shock the sentiments, and upset the theories of Peace Societies.

"Am I to understand," said Mr. Rugge, in a whisper, when Waife had drawn him to the farthest end of the inner room, with the bed-curtains between their position and the door deadening the sound of their voices—"am I to understand that, after my taking you and that child to my theatre out of charity, and at your own request, you are going to quit me without warning—French leave—is that British conduct?"

"Mr. Rugge," replied Waife, deprecatingly, "I have no engagement with you beyond an experimental trial. We were free on both sides for three months—you to dismiss us any day, we to leave you. The experiment does not please us; we thank you, and depart."

Rugge. "That is not the truth. I said *I* was free to dismiss you both if the child did not suit. You, poor helpless creature, could be of no use. But I never heard you say you were to be free, too. Stand to reason not! Put my engagements at a Waife's mercy!—I, Lorenzo Rugge!—stuff! But I'm a just man, and a liberal man, and if you think you ought to have a higher salary—if this ungrateful proceeding is only, as I take it, a strike for wages—I will meet you. Julia Araminta does play better than I could have supposed; and I'll conclude an engagement on good terms, as we were to have done if the experiment answered, for three years."

Waife shook his head. "You are very good, Mr. Rugge, but it is not a strike. My little girl does not like the life at any price; and since she supports me, I am bound to please her. Besides," said the actor, with a stiffer manner, "you have broken faith with me. It was fully understood that I was to appear no more on your stage; all my task was to advise with you in the performances, remodel the plays, help in the stage-management; and you took advantage of my penury, and, when I asked for a small advance, insisted on forcing these relics of what I was upon the public pity. Enough—we part. I bear no malice."

Rugge. "Oh, don't you? No more do I. But I am a Briton, and I have the spirit of one. You had better not make an enemy of me."

Waife. "I am above the necessity of making enemies. I have an enemy ready made in myself."

Rugge placed a strong bony hand upon the cripple's arm. "I dare say you have! A bad conscience, Sir. How would you like your past life looked into and blabbed out?"

Gentleman Waife (mournfully). "The last four years of it have been spent in your service, Mr. Rugge. If their record had been blabbed out for my benefit, there would not have been a dry eye in the house."

Rugge. "I disdain your sneer. When a scorpion nursed at my bosom sneers at me, I leave it to its own reflections. But I don't speak of the years in which that scorpion has been enjoying a salary and smoking canaster at my expense. I refer to an earlier dodge in its checkered existence. Ha, Sir, you wince! I suspect I can find out something about you which would—"

Waife (fiercely). "Would what?"

Rugge. "Oh, lower your tone, Sir—no bullying me. I suspect! I have good reason for suspicion; and if you sneak off in this way, and cheat me out of my property in Julia Araminta, I will leave no stone unturned to prove what I suspect. Look to it, slight man! Come, I don't wish to quarrel; make it up, and" (drawing out his pocket-book) "if you want cash down, and will have an engagement in black and white for three years for Julia Araminta, you may squeeze a good sum out of me, and go yourself where you please; you'll never be troubled by me. What I want is the girl."

All the actor laid aside, Waife growled out, "And hang me, Sir, if you shall have the girl!"

At this moment Sophy opened the door wide, and entered boldly. She had heard her grandfather's voice raised, though its hoarse tones did not allow her to distinguish his words. She was alarmed for him. She came in, his guardian fairy, to protect him from the oppressor of six feet high. Rugge's arm was raised, not indeed to strike, but rather to declaim. Sophy slid between him and her grandfather, and clinging round the latter, flung out her own arm, the forefinger raised menacingly toward the Remorseless Baron. How you would have clapped if you had seen her so at Covent Garden. But I'll swear the child did not know she was acting. Rugge did, and was struck with admiration and regretful rage at the idea of losing her.

"Bravo!" said he, involuntarily. "Come—come, Waife, look at her—she was born for the stage. My heart swells with pride. She is my property, morally speaking; make her so legally—and hark, in your ear—fifty pounds. Take me in the humor. Golgonda opens—fifty pounds!"

"No," said the vagrant.

"Well," said Rugge, sullenly, "let her speak for herself."

"Speak, child. You don't wish to return to Mr. Rugge—and without me, too—do you, Sophy?"

"Without you, Grandy! I'd rather die first."

"You hear her; all is settled between us. You have had our services up to last night; you have paid us up to last night; and so good-morning to you, Mr. Rugge."

"My dear child," said the manager, softening his voice as much as he could, "do consider. You shall be so made of, without that stupid old man. You think me cross, but 'tis he who irritates and puts me out of temper. I'm uncommon fond of children. I had a babe of my own once—upon my honor I had—and if it had not been for convulsions, caused by teething, I should be a father still. Supply to me the place of that beloved babe. You shall have such fine dresses; all new—choose 'em yourself—minced veal and raspberry tarts for dinner every Sunday. In three years, under my care, you will become a great actress, and make your fortune, and marry a lord—lords go out of their wits for great actresses—whereas, with him, what will you do? Drudge, and rot, and starve; and he can't live long, and then where will *you* be? 'Tis a shame to hold her so, you idle old vagabond."

"I don't hold her," said Waife, trying to push her away. "There's something in what the man says. Choose for yourself, Sophy."

SOPHY (suppressing a sob). "How can you have the heart to talk so, Grandy? I tell you, Mr. Rugge, you are a bad man, and I hate you, and all about you—and I'll stay with grandfather — and I don't care if I do starve — he shan't!"

Mr. RUGGE (clapping both hands on the crown of his hat, and striding to the door). "William Waife, beware! 'Tis done! I'm your enemy! As for you, too dear but abandoned infant, stay with him. You'll find out very soon who and what he is—your pride will have a fall, when—"

Waife sprang forward, despite his lameness—both his fists clenched, his one eye ablaze; his broad, burly torso confronted and daunted the stormy manager. Taller and younger though Rugge was, he cowered before the cripple he had so long taunted and humbled. The words stood arrested on his tongue. "Leave the room instantly!" thundered the actor, in a voice no longer broken. "Blacken my name before that child by one word, and I will dash the next down your throat!"

Rugge rushed to the door, and keeping it ajar between Waife and himself, he then thrust in his head, hissing forth, "Fly, caitiff, fly! My revenge shall track your secret, and place you in my power. Juliet Araminta shall yet be mine!" With these awful words the Remorseless Baron cleared the stairs in two bounds, and was out of the house.

Waife smiled, contemptuously. But as the street-door clanged on the form of the angry manager the color faded from the old man's face. Exhausted by the excitement he had gone through, he sank on a chair, and with one quick gasp as for breath, fainted away.

CHAPTER XI.

Progress of the Fine Arts.—Biographical Anecdotes.—Fluctuations in the Value of Money.—Speculative Tendencies of the Time.

WHATEVER the shock which the brutality of the Remorseless Baron inflicted on the nervous system of the persecuted but triumphant Bandit, it had certainly subsided by the time Vance and Lionel entered Waife's apartment, for they found grandfather and grandchild seated near the open window, at the corner of the table (on which they had made room for their operations by the removal of the carved cocoanut, the crystal egg, and the two flower-pots), eagerly engaged, with many a silvery laugh from the lips of Sophy, in the game of dominoes.

Mr. Waife had been devoting himself, for the last hour and more, to the instruction of Sophy in the mysteries of that intellectual amusement, and such pains did he take, and so impressive were his exhortations, that his happy pupil could not help thinking to herself that *this* was the new art upon which Waife depended for their future livelihood. She sprang up, however, at the entrance of the visitors, her face beaming with grateful smiles; and, running to Lionel, and taking him by the hand, while she courtesied with more respect to Vance, she exclaimed, "We are free! thanks to you—thanks to you both! He is gone! Mr. Rugge is gone!"

"So I saw on passing the green; stage and all," said Vance, while Lionel kissed the child and pressed her to his side. It is astonishing how paternal he felt—how much she had crept into his heart.

"Pray, Sir," asked Sophy, timidly, glancing to Vance, "has the Norfolk Giant gone too?"

VANCE. "I fancy so—all the shows were either gone or going."

SOPHY. "The Calf with Two Heads?"

VANCE. "Do you regret it?"

SOPHY. "Oh, dear, no."

Waife, who, after a profound bow, and a cheery "Good-day, gentlemen," had hitherto remained silent, putting away the dominoes, now said—"I suppose, Sir, you would like at once to begin your sketch?"

VANCE. "Yes; I have brought all my tools—see, even the canvas. I wish it were larger, but it is all I have with me of that material—'tis already stretched—just let me arrange the light."

WAIFE. "If you don't want me, gentlemen, I will take the air for half an hour or so. In fact, I may now feel free to look after my investment."

SOPHY (whispering Lionel). "You are *sure* the Calf has gone as well as the Norfolk Giant?"

Lionel wonderingly replied that he thought so; and Waife disappeared into his room, whence he soon emerged, having doffed his dressing-gown for a black coat, by no means threadbare, and well brushed. Hat, stick, and gloves in hand, he really seemed respectable—more than respectable—Gentleman Waife every inch of him; and saying, "Look your best, Sophy, and sit still, if you can," nodded pleasantly to the three, and hobbled down the stairs. Sophy—whom Vance had just settled into a chair, with her head bent partially down (three quarters), as the artist had released

"The loose train of her amber-flowing hair,"

and was contemplating aspect and position with a painter's meditative eye—started up, to his great discomposure, and rushed to the window. She returned to her seat with her mind much relieved. Waife was walking in an opposite direction to that which led toward the whilome quarters of the Norfolk Giant and the Two-headed Calf.

"Come, come," said Vance, impatiently, "you have broken an idea in half. I beg you will not stir till I have placed you—and then, if all else of you be still, you may exercise your tongue. I give you leave to talk."

SOPHY (penitentially). "I am so sorry—I beg pardon. Will that do, Sir?"

VANCE. "Head a little more to the right—so. Titania watching Bottom asleep. Will you lie on the floor, Lionel, and do Bottom?"

LIONEL (indignantly). "Bottom! Have I an ass's head?"

VANCE. "Immaterial! I can easily imagine that you have one. I want merely an outline of figure—something sprawling and ungainly."

LIONEL (sulkily). "Much obliged to you—imagine that too."

VANCE. "Don't be so disobliging. It is necessary that she should look fondly at something—expression in the eye."

Lionel at once reclined himself incumbent in a position as little sprawling and ungainly as he could well contrive.

VANCE. "Fancy, Miss Sophy, that this young gentleman is very dear to you. Have you got a brother?"

SOPHY. "Ah no, Sir."

VANCE. "Hum. But you have, or have had, a doll?"

SOPHY. "Oh, yes; grandfather gave me one."

VANCE. "And you were fond of that doll?"

SOPHY. "Very."

VANCE. "Fancy that young gentleman is your doll grown big—that it is asleep, and you are watching that no one hurts it—Mr. Rugge, for instance. Throw your whole soul into that thought—love for doll, apprehension of Rugge. Lionel, keep still and shut your eyes—do."

LIONEL (grumbling). "I did not come here to be made a doll of."

VANCE. "Coax him to be quiet, Miss Sophy, and sleep peaceably, or I shall do him a mischief. I can be a Rugge too, if I am put out."

SOPHY (in the softest tones). "Do try and sleep, Sir—shall I get you a pillow?"

LIONEL. "No, thank you—I'm very comfortable now" (settling his head upon his arm, and after one upward glance toward Sophy, the lids closed reluctantly over his softened eyes). A ray of sunshine came aslant through the half-shut window, and played along the boy's clustering hair and smooth pale cheek. Sophy's gaze rested on him most benignly.

"Just so," said Vance; "and now be silent till I have got the attitude and fixed the look."

The artist sketched away rapidly with a bold practiced hand, and all was silent for about half an hour, when he said, "You may get up, Lionel; I have done with you for the present."

SOPHY. "And me, too—may I see?"

VANCE. "No; but you may talk now. So you had a doll? What has become of it?"

SOPHY. "I left it behind, Sir. Grandfather thought it would distract me from attending to his lessons, and learning my part."

VANCE. "You love your grandfather more than the doll?"

SOPHY. "Oh! a thousand million million times more."

VANCE. "He brought you up, I suppose. Have you no father—no mother?"

SOPHY. "I have only grandfather."

LIONEL. "Have you always lived with him?"

SOPHY. "Dear me, no; I was with Mrs. Crane till grandfather came from abroad, and took me away, and put me with some very kind people; and then, when grandfather had that bad accident, I came to stay with him, and we have been together ever since."

LIONEL. "Was Mrs. Crane no relation of yours?"

SOPHY. "No, I suppose not, for she was not kind—I was so miserable: but don't talk of it—I forget that now. I only wish to remember from the time grandfather took me in his lap, and told me to be a good child, and love him; and I have been happy ever since."

"You *are* a dear good child," said Lionel, emphatically, "and I wish I had you for my sister."

VANCE. "When your grandfather has received from me that exorbitant—not that I grudge it—sum, I should like to ask, What will he do with it? As he said it was a secret, I must not pump you."

SOPHY. "What will he do with it? I should like to know too, Sir; but whatever it is, I don't care, so long as I and grandfather are together."

Here Waife re-entered. "Well, how goes on the picture?"

VANCE. "Tolerably for the first sitting; I require two more."

WAIFE. "Certainly; only—only" (he drew aside Vance, and whispered), "only, the day after to-morrow, I fear I *shall* want the money. It is an occasion that never will occur again—I would seize it."

VANCE. "Take the money, now."

WAIFE. "Well, thank you, Sir; you are sure now that we shall not run away—and I accept your kindness; it will make all safe."

Vance, with surprising alacrity, slipped the sovereigns into the old man's hand; for, truth to say, though thrifty, the Artist was really generous. His organ of caution was large, but that of acquisitiveness moderate. Moreover, in those moments when his soul expanded with his art, he was insensibly less alive to the value of money. And strange it is that, though states strive to fix for that commodity the most abiding standards, yet the value of money, to the individual who regards it, shifts and fluctuates, goes up and down half a dozen times a day. For my part, I honestly declare that there are hours in the twenty-four—such, for instance, as that just before breakfast, or that succeeding a page of this History in which I have been put out of temper with my performance and myself, when any one in want of five shillings at my disposal would find my value of that sum put it quite out of his reach; while at other times—just after dinner, for instance, or when I have effected what seems to me a happy stroke, or a good bit of color, in this historical composition—the value of those five shillings is so much depreciated that I might be—I think so, at least—I might be almost tempted to give them away for nothing. Under some such mysterious influences in the money market, Vance, therefore, felt not the loss of his three sovereigns; and, returning to his easel, drove away Lionel and Sophy, who had taken that opportunity to gaze on the canvas.

"Don't do her justice at all," quoth Lionel; "all the features exaggerated."

"And you pretend to paint!" returned Vance, in great scorn, and throwing a cloth over his canvas. "To-morrow, Mr. Waife, the same hour. Now, Lionel, get your hat, and come away."

Vance carried off the canvas, and Lionel followed slowly. Sophy gazed at their departing forms from the open window; Waife stumped about the room, rubbing his hands—"He'll do, he'll do; I always thought so." Sophy turned "Who'll do?—the young gentleman. Do what?"

WAIFE. "The young gentleman—as if I was thinking of him. Our new companion—I have been with him this last hour. Wonderful natural gifts."

SOPHY (ruefully). "It is alive, then?"

WAIFE. "Alive! yes, I should think so.

Sophy (half-crying). "I'm very sorry; I know I shall hate it."

"Tut, darling—get me my pipe—I'm happy."

Sophy (cutting short her fit of ill-humor). "Are you?—then I am, and I will not hate it."

CHAPTER XII.

In which it is shown that a man does this or declines to do that for reasons best known to himself—a reserve which is extremely conducive to the social interests of a community; since the conjecture into the origin and nature of those reasons stimulates the inquiring faculties, and furnishes the staple of modern conversation. And as it is not to be denied that, if their neighbors left them nothing to guess at, three-fourths of civilized humankind, male or female, would have nothing to talk about; so we can not too gratefully encourage that needful curiosity, termed, by the inconsiderate, tittle-tattle or scandal, which saves the vast majority of our species from being reduced to the degraded condition of dumb animals.

The next day the sitting was renewed; but Waife did not go out, and the conversation was a little more restrained; or rather, Waife had the larger share in it. The comedian, when he pleased, could certainly be very entertaining. It was not so much in what he said, as his manner of saying it. He was a strange combination of sudden extremes, at one while on a tone of easy but not undignified familiarity with his visitors, as if their equal in position, their superior in years; then abruptly, humble, deprecating, almost obsequious, almost servile; and then, again, jerked, as it were, into pride and stiffness, falling back, as if the effort were impossible, into meek dejection. Still, the prevalent character of the man's mood and talk was social, quaint, cheerful. Evidently he was, by original temperament, a droll and joyous humorist, with high animal spirits; and, withal, an infantine simplicity at times, like the clever man who never learns the world, and is always taken in.

A circumstance, trifling in itself, but suggestive of speculation either as to the character or antecedent circumstances of Gentleman Waife, did not escape Vance's observation. Since his rupture with Mr. Rugge, there was a considerable amelioration in that affection of the trachea which, while his engagement with Rugge lasted, had rendered the comedian's dramatic talents unavailable on the stage. He now expressed himself without the pathetic hoarseness or cavernous wheeze which had previously thrown a wet blanket over his efforts at discourse. But Vance put no very stern construction on the dissimulation which this change seemed to denote. Since Waife was still one-eyed and a cripple, he might very excusably shrink from reappearance on the stage, and affect a third infirmity to save his pride from the exhibition of the two infirmities that were genuine.

That which most puzzled Vance was that which had most puzzled the Cobbler—What could the man once have been?—how fallen so low?—for fall it was! that was clear. The painter, though not himself of patrician extraction, had been much in the best society. He had been a petted favorite in great houses. He had traveled. He had seen the world. He had the habits and the instincts of good society.

Now, in what the French term the *beau monde*, there are little traits that reveal those who have entered it—certain tricks of phrase, certain modes of expression—even the pronunciation of familiar words, even the modulation of an accent. A man of the most refined bearing may not have these peculiarities; a man, otherwise coarse and brusque in his manner, may. The slang of the *beau monde* is quite apart from the code of high-breeding. Now and then, something in Waife's talk seemed to show that he had lighted on that beau-world; now and then, that something wholly vanished. So that Vance might have said, "He has been admitted there, not inhabited it."

Yet Vance could not feel sure, after all; comedians are such takes-in. But was the man, by the profession of his earlier life, a comedian? Vance asked the question adroitly.

"You must have taken to the stage young?" said he.

"The stage!" said Waife; "if you mean the public stage—no. I have acted pretty often in youth, even in childhood, to amuse others, never professionally to support myself, till Mr. Rugge civilly engaged me four years ago."

"Is it possible—with your excellent education! But pardon me; I have hinted my surprise at your late vocation before, and it displeased you."

"Displeased me!" said Waife, with an abject, depressed manner; "I hope I said nothing that would have misbecome a poor broken vagabond like me. I am no prince in disguise—a good-for-nothing varlet who should be too grateful to have something to keep himself from a dung-hill."

Lionel. "Don't talk so. And but for your accident you might now be the great attraction on the metropolitan stage. Who does not respect a really fine actor?"

Waife (gloomily). "The Metropolitan Stage! I was talked into it; I am glad even of the accident that saved me—say no more of that, no more of that. But I have spoiled your sitting: Sophy, you see, has left her chair."

"I have done for to-day," said Vance; "to-morrow, and my task is ended."

Lionel came up to Vance and whispered to him; the painter, after a pause, nodded silently, and then said to Waife—

"We are going to enjoy the fine weather on the Thames (after I have put away these things), and shall return to our inn—not far hence—to sup, at eight o'clock. Supper is our principal meal—we rarely spoil our days by the ceremonial of a formal dinner. Will you do us the favor to sup with us? Our host has a wonderful whisky, which, when raw, is Glenlivat, but, refined into toddy, is nectar. Bring your pipe, and let us hear John Kemble again."

Waife's face lighted up. "You are most kind; nothing I should like so much. But—" and the light fled, the face darkened—"but no; I can not—you don't know—that is—I—I have made a vow to myself to decline all such temptations. I humbly beg you'll excuse me."

Vance. "Temptations! of what kind—the whisky-toddy?"

Waife (puffing away a sigh). "Ah, yes; whisky-toddy if you please. Perhaps I once loved a glass too well, and could not resist a

glass too much now; and if I once broke the rule, and became a tippler, what would happen to Juliet Araminta? For her sake, don't press me?"

"Oh, do go, Grandy; he never drinks—never any thing stronger than tea, I assure you, Sir; it can't be that."

"It is, silly child, and nothing else," said Waife positively—drawing himself up. "Excuse me."

Lionel began brushing his hat with his sleeve, and his face worked; at last he said, "Well, Sir, then may I ask another favor? Mr. Vance and I are going to-morrow, after the sitting, to see Hampton Court; we have kept that excursion to the last before leaving these parts. Would you and little Sophy come with us in the boat? we will have no whisky-toddy, and we will bring you both safe home."

Waife. "What—I—what—I! You are very young, Sir—a gentleman born and bred, I'll swear; and you to be seen, perhaps by some of your friends or family, with an old vagrant like me, in the Queen's palace—the public gardens! I should be the vilest wretch if I took such advantage of your goodness. 'Pretty company,' they would say, 'you have got into.' With me—with me! Don't be alarmed, Mr. Vance—not to be thought of."

The young men were deeply affected.

"I can't accept that reason," said Lionel, tremulously. "Though I must not presume to derange your habits. But she may go with us, mayn't she? We'll take care of her, and she is dressed so plainly and neatly, and looks such a little lady" (turning to Vance).

"Yes, let her come with us," said the artist, benevolently; though he by no means shared in Lionel's enthusiastic desire for her company. He thought she would be greatly in their way.

"Heaven bless you both!" answered Waife; "and she wants a holiday; she shall have it."

"I'd rather stay with you, Grandy; you'll be so lone."

"No, I wish to be out all to-morrow—the investment! I shall not be alone—making friends with our future companion, Sophy."

"And can do without me already?—heigh-ho!"

Vance. "So that's settled; good-by to you."

CHAPTER XIII.

Inspiring effect of the Fine Arts: the Vulgar are moved by their exhibition into generous impulses and flights of fancy, checked by the ungracious severities of their superiors, as exemplified in the instance of Cobbler Merle and his Servant-of-All-Work.

The next day, perhaps with the idea of removing all scruple from Sophy's mind, Waife had already gone after his investment when the friends arrived. Sophy at first was dull and dispirited, but by degrees she brightened up; and when, the sitting over and the picture done (save such final touches as Vance reserved for solitary study), she was permitted to gaze at her own effigy, she burst into exclamations of frank delight. "Am I like that! is it possible? Oh, how beautiful! Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle!" and running out of the room before Vance could stop her, she returned with the Cobbler, followed, too, by a thin, gaunt girl, whom he pomposly called his housekeeper, but who, in sober truth, was servant-of-all-work. Wife he had none—his horoscope, he said, having Saturn in square to the Seventh House, forbade him to venture upon matrimony. All gathered round the picture; all admired, and with justice—it was a *chef-d'œuvre*. Vance in his maturest day never painted more charmingly. The three pounds proved to be the best outlay of capital he had ever made. Pleased with his work, he was pleased even with that unsophisticated applause.

"You must have Mercury and Venus very strongly aspected," quoth the Cobbler; "and if you have the Dragon's Head in the Tenth House, you may count on being much talked of after you are dead."

"After I am dead!—sinister omen!" said Vance, discomposed. "I have no faith in artists who count on being talked of after they are dead. Never knew a dauber who did not! But stand back—time flies—tie up your hair—put on your bonnet, Titania. You have a shawl?—not tinsel, I hope!—quieter the better. You stay and see to her, Lionel."

Said the gaunt servant-of-all-work to Mr. Merle—"I'd let the gentleman paint me, if he likes it—shall I tell him, master?"

"Go back to the bacon, foolish woman. Why, he gave £3 for her likeness, 'cause of her Benefics! But you'd have to give him three years' wages afore he'd look you straight in the face, 'cause, you see, your Aspects are crooked. And," added the Cobbler, philosophizing, "when the Malefics are dead agin a girl's mug, man is so constituted by natur that he can't take to that mug unless it has a gold handle. Don't fret, 'tis not your fault: born under Scorpio—coarse-limbed—dull complexion—Head of the Dragon aspected of—In fortunes in all four angles!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The Historian takes advantage of the summer hours vouchsafed to the present life of Mr. Waife's grandchild, in order to throw a few gleams of light on her past. He leads her into the Palace of our Kings, and moralizes thereon; and entering the Royal Gardens, shows the uncertainty of Human Events, and the insecurity of British Laws, by the abrupt seizure and constrained deportation of an innocent and unforeboding Englishman.

Such a glorious afternoon! The capricious English summer was so kind that day to the child and her new friends! When Sophy's small foot once trod the sward, had she been really Queen of the Green People, sward and footstep could not more joyously have met together. The grasshopper bounded, in fearless trust, upon the hem of her frock; she threw herself down on the grass, and caught him, but, oh, so tenderly; and the gay insect, dear to poet and fairy, seemed to look at her from that quaint, sharp face of his with sagacious recognition, resting calmly on the palm of her pretty hand; then when he sprang off, little moth-like butterflies peculiar to the margins of running waters, quivered up from the herbage, fluttering round her. And there, in front, lay the Thames, glittering through the willows, Vance getting ready the boat, Lionel seated by her side, a child like her-

self, his pride of incipient manhood all forgotten; happy in her glee—she loving him for the joy she felt—and blending his image evermore in her remembrance with her first summer holiday—with sunny beams—glistening leaves—warbling birds—fairy wings—sparkling waves. Oh to live so in a child's heart—innocent, blessed, angel-like—better, better than the troubled reflection upon woman's later thoughts; better than that mournful illusion, over which tears so bitter are daily shed—better than First Love! They entered the boat. Sophy had never, to the best of her recollection, been in a boat before. All was new to her; the life-like speed of the little vessel—that world of cool, green weeds, with the fish darting to and fro—the musical chime of oars—those distant, stately swans. She was silent now—her heart was very full.

"What are you thinking of, Sophy?" asked Leonard, resting on the oar.

"Thinking—I was not thinking."

"What then?"

"I don't know—feeling, I suppose."

"Feeling what?"

"As if between sleep and waking—as the water perhaps feels, with the sunlight on it!"

"Poetical," said Vance, who, somewhat of a poet himself, naturally sneered at poetical tendencies in others. "But not so bad in its way. Ah, have I hurt your vanity? there are tears in your eyes."

"No, Sir," said Sophy, falteringly. "But I *was* thinking then."

"Ah," said the artist, "that's the worst of it; after feeling ever comes thought—what was yours?"

"I was sorry poor grandfather was not here, that's all."

"It was not our fault; we pressed him cordially," said Lionel.

"You did, indeed, Sir—thank you! And I don't know why he refused you." The young men exchanged compassionate glances.

Lionel then sought to make her talk of her past life—tell him more of Mrs. Crane. Who and what was she?

Sophy could not, or would not, tell. The remembrances were painful; she had evidently tried to forget them. And the people with whom Waife had placed her, and who had been kind?

The Miss Burtons—and they kept a day-school, and taught Sophy to read, write, and cipher. They lived near London, in a lane opening on a great common, with a green rail before the house, and had a good many pupils, and kept a tortoise-shell cat and a canary. Not much to enlighten her listener did Sophy impart here.

And now they neared that stately palace, rich in associations of storm and splendor. The grand Cardinal—the iron-clad Protector; Dutch William of the immortal memory, whom we try so hard to like, and, in spite of the great Whig historian, that Titian of English prose, can only frigidly respect. Hard task for us Britons to like a Dutchman who dethrones his father-in-law and drinks schnaps. Prejudice, certainly; but so it is. Harder still to like Dutch William's unfilial Frau! Like Queen Mary! I could as soon like Queen Goneril! Romance flies from the prosperous, phlegmatic Æneas; flies from his plump Lavinia, his "fidus Achates," Bentinck, flies to follow the poor, deserted, fugitive Stuart, with all his sins upon his head. Kings have no rights divine, except when deposed and fallen; they are then invested with the awe that belongs to each solemn image of mortal vicissitude—Vicissitude that startles the Epicurean, "*insanientis sapientiæ consultus*," and strikes from his careless lyre the notes that attest a God! Some proud shadow chases another from the throne of Cyrus, and Horace hears in the thunder the rush of Diespiter, and identifies Providence with the Fortune that snatches off the diadem in her whirring swoop.* But fronts discrowned take a new majesty to generous natures;—in all sleek prosperity there is something commonplace—in all grand adversity, something royal.

The boat shot to the shore; the young people landed, and entered the arch of the desolate palace. They gazed on the great hall and the presence-chamber and the long suite of rooms, with faded portraits—Vance as an artist, Lionel as an enthusiastic, well-read boy, Sophy as a wondering, bewildered, ignorant child. And then they emerged into the noble garden, with its regal trees. Groups were there of well-dressed persons. Vance heard himself called by name. He had forgotten the London world—forgotten, amidst his midsummer ramblings that the London season was still ablaze—and there, stragglers from the great Focus, fine people, with languid tones and artificial jaded smiles, caught him in his wanderer's dress, and walking side by side with the infant wonder of Mr. Rugge's show, exquisitely neat indeed, but still in a colored print, of a pattern familiar to his observant eye in the windows of many a shop lavish of tickets, and inviting you to come in by the assurance that it is "selling off." The artist stopped, colored, bowed, answered the listless questions put to him with shy haste; he then attempted to escape—they would not let him.

"You *must* come back and dine with us at the Star and Garter," said Lady Selina Vipont. "A pleasant party—you know most of them—the Dudley Slowes, dear old Lady Frost, those pretty ladies Prymme, Janet and Wilhelmina."

"We can't let you off," said sleepily Mr. Crampe, a fashionable wit, who rarely made more than one bon-mot in the twenty-four hours, and spent the rest of his time in a torpid state.

VANCE. "Really you are too kind, but I am not even dressed for—"

LADY SELINA. "So charmingly dressed—so picturesque! Besides, what matters? Every one knows who you are. Where on earth have you been?"

VANCE. "Rambling about, taking sketches."

LADY SELINA (directing her eye-glass toward Lionel and Sophy, who stood aloof). "But your

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"——— Valet ima summis
Mutare, et insignia attenuat Deus,
Obscura promens. Hinc apicem rapax
Fortuna cum stridore acuto
Sustulit,—hic posuisse gaudet."
—HORAT. *Carm.*, lib. i. xxxiv.

The concluding allusion is evidently to the Parthian revolutions, and the changeful fate of Phraates IV.; and I do not feel sure that the preceding lines upon the phenomenon of the thunder in a serene sky have not a latent and half-allegorical meaning, dimly applicable, throughout, to the historical reference at the close.

companions, your brother?—and that pretty little girl—your sister, I suppose?"

VANCE (shuddering). "No, not relations. I took charge of the boy—clever young fellow; and the little girl is—"

LADY SELINA. "Yes. The little girl is—"

VANCE. "A little girl as you see; and very pretty, as you say—subject for a picture."

LADY SELINA (indifferently). "Oh, let the children go and amuse themselves somewhere. Now we have found you—positively you are our prisoner."

Lady Selina Vipont was one of the queens of London, she had with her that habit of command natural to such royalties. Frank Vance was no tuft-hunter, but once under social influences, they had their effect on him, as on most men who are blessed with noses in the air. Those great ladies, it is true, never bought his pictures, but they gave him the position which induced others to buy them. Vance loved his art; his art needed its career. Its career was certainly brightened and quickened by the help of rank and fashion.

In short, Lady Selina triumphed, and the painter stepped back to Lionel. "I must go to Richmond with these people. I know you'll excuse me. I shall be back to-night somehow. By-the-by, you are going to the post-office here for the letter you expect from your mother; ask for mine too. You will take care of little Sophy, and (in a whisper) hurry her out of the garden, or that Grand Mogul feminine, Lady Selina, whose condescension would crush the Andes, will be stopping her as my *protégée*, falling in raptures with that horrid colored print, saying, 'Dear what pretty sprigs! where can such things be got?' and learning, perhaps, how Frank Vance saved the Bandit's Child from the Remorseless Baron. 'Tis your turn now. Save your friend. The Baron was a lamb compared to a fine lady." He pressed Lionel's unresponding hand, and was off to join the polite merry-making of the Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes.

Lionel's pride ran up to the fever heat of its thermometer; more roused, though, on behalf of the unconscious Sophy than himself.

"Let us come into the town, lady-bird, and choose a doll. You may have one now without fear of distracting you from—what I hate to think you ever stooped to perform."

As Lionel, his crest erect, and nostril dilated, and holding Sophy firmly by the hand, took his way out from the gardens, he was obliged to pass the patrician party of whom Vance now made one.

His countenance and air, as he swept by, struck them all, especially Lady Selina. "A very distinguished-looking boy," said she. "What a fine face! Who did you say he was, Mr. Vance?"

VANCE. "His name is Haughton—Lionel Haughton?"

LADY SELINA. "Haughton! Haughton! Any relation to poor, dear Captain Haughton—Charlie Haughton, as he was generally called?"

Vance, knowing little more of his young friend's parentage than that his mother let lodgings, at which, once domiciliated himself, he had made the boy's acquaintance, and that she enjoyed the pension of a captain's widow, replied carelessly:

"His father was a captain, but I don't know whether he was a Charlie."

MR. CRAMPE (the Wit). "Charlies are extinct! I have the last in a fossil—box and all!"

General laugh. Wit shut up again.

LADY SELINA. "He has a great look of Charlie Haughton. Do you know if he is connected with that extraordinary man, Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE. "Upon my word, I do not. What Mr. Darrell do you mean?"

Lady Selina, with one of those sublime looks of celestial pity with which personages in the great world forgive ignorance of names and genealogies in those not born within its orbit, replied, "Oh, to be sure; it is not exactly in the way of your delightful art to know Mr. Darrell, one of the first men in Parliament, a connection of mine."

LADY FROST (nippingly). "You mean Guy Darrell, the lawyer."

LADY SELINA. "Lawyer—true, now I think of it, he was a lawyer. But his chief fame was in the House of Commons. All parties agreed that he might have commanded any station; but he was too rich, perhaps, to care sufficiently about office. At all events, Parliament was dissolved when he was at the height of his reputation, and he refused to be re-elected."

One SIR JASPER STOLLHEAD (a member of the House of Commons, young, wealthy, a constant attendant, of great promise, with speeches that were filled with facts, and emptied the benches). "I have heard of him. Before my time; lawyers not much weight in the House now."

LADY SELINA. "I am told that Mr. Darrell did not speak like a lawyer. But his career is over—lives in the country, and sees nobody—a thousand pities—a connection of mine, too—great loss to the country. Ask your young friend. Mr. Vance, if Mr. Darrell is not his relation. I hope so, for his sake. Now that our party is in power, Mr. Darrell could command any thing for others, though he has ceased to act with us. Our party is not forgetful of talents."

LADY FROST (with icy crispness). "I should think not; it has so little of that kind to remember."

SIR JASPER. "Talent is not wanted in the House of Commons now—don't go down, in fact. Business assembly."

LADY SELINA (suppressing a yawn). "Beautiful day! We had better think of going back to Richmond."

General assent, and slow retreat.

CHAPTER XV.

The Historian records the attachment to public business which distinguishes the British Legislator.—Touching instance of the regret which ever in patriotic bosoms attends the neglect of a public duty.

FROM the dusty height of a rumble-tumble affixed to Lady Selina Vipont's barouche, and by the animated side of Sir Jasper Stollhead, Vance caught sight of Lionel and Sophy at a corner of the spacious green near the Palace. He sighed, he envied them. He thought of the boat, the water, the honey-suckle arbor at the little inn—pleasures he had denied himself—pleasures all in his own way. They seemed still more alluring by contrast with the prospect be-

fore him; formal dinner at the Star and Garter, with titled Prymmes, Slowes, and Frosts, a couple of guineas a-head, including light wines, which he did not drink, and the expense of a chaise back by himself. But such are life and its social duties—such, above all, ambition and a career. Who, that would leave a name on his tombstone, can say to his own heart, "Perish, Stars and Garters; my existence shall pass from day to day in honey-suckle arbors?"

Sir Jasper Stollhead interrupted Vance's reverie by an impassioned sneeze—"Dreadful smell of hay!" said the legislator, with watery eyes. "Are you subject to the hay fever? I am! A—tisha—tisha—tisha (sneezing)—country frightfully unwholesome at this time of year. And to think that I ought now to be in the House—in my committee-room—no smell of hay there—most important committee."

Vance (rousing himself). "Ah!—on what?"

Sir Jasper (regretfully). "Sewers!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Signs of an impending revolution, which, like all revolutions, seems to come of a sudden, though its causes have long been at work; and to go off in a tantrum, though its effects must run on to the end of a history.

Lionel could not find in the toyshops of the village a doll good enough to satisfy his liberal inclinations, but he bought one which amply contented the humbler aspirations of Sophy. He then strolled to the post-office. There were several letters for Vance—one for himself in his mother's handwriting. He delayed opening it for the moment. The day was far advanced—Sophy must be hungry. In vain she declared she was not. They passed by a fruiterer's stall. The strawberries and cherries were temptingly fresh—the sun still very powerful. At the back of the fruiterer's was a small garden, or rather orchard, smiling cool through the open door—little tables laid out there. The good woman who kept the shop was accustomed to the wants and tastes of humble metropolitan visitors. But the garden was luckily now empty—it was before the usual hour for tea-parties; so the young folks had the pleasantest table under an apple-tree, and the choice of the freshest fruit. Milk and cakes were added to the fare. It was a banquet, in Sophy's eyes, worthy that happy day. And when Lionel had finished his share of the feast, eating fast, as spirited impatient boys, formed to push on in life and spoil their digestion, are apt to do; and while Sophy was still lingering over the last of the strawberries, he threw himself back on his chair, and drew forth his letter. Lionel was extremely fond of his mother, but her letters were not often those which a boy is over eager to read. It is not all mothers who understand what boys are—their quick susceptibilities, their precocious manliness, all their mystical ways and oddities. A letter from Mrs. Haughton generally somewhat fretted and irritated Lionel's high-strung nerves, and he had instinctively put off the task of reading the one he held, till satisfied hunger and cool-breathing shadows, and rest from the dusty road, had lent their soothing aid to his undeveloped philosophy.

He broke the seal slowly; another letter was inclosed within. At the first few words his countenance changed; he uttered a slight exclamation, read on eagerly; then, before concluding his mother's epistle, hastily tore open that which it had contained, ran his eye over its contents, and, dropping both letters on the turf below, rested his face on his hand, in agitated thought. Thus ran his mother's letter:

"My Dear Boy,—How could you? Do it slyly!! Unknown to your own mother!!! I could not believe it of you!!!! Take advantage of my confidence in showing you the letters of your father's cousin, to write to himself—*clandestinely!*—you, who I thought had such an open character, and who ought to appreciate mine. Every one who knows me says I am a woman in ten thousand—not for beauty and talent (though I have had my admirers for them too), but for GOODNESS! As a wife and mother, I may say I have been exemplary. I had sore trials with the dear captain—and IMMENSE temptations. But he said on his death-bed, 'Jessica, you are an angel.' And I have had offers since—IMMENSE offers—but I devoted myself to my child, as you know. And what I have put up with, letting the first floor, nobody can tell; and only a widow's pension—going before a magistrate to get it paid. And to think my own child, for whom I have borne so much, should behave so cruelly to me! Clandestine! 'tis *that* which stabs me. Mrs. Inman found me crying, and said, 'What is the matter?—you, who are such an angel, crying like a baby!' And I could not help saying, '"Tis the serpent's tooth, Mrs. I.' What you wrote to your benefactor (and I *had* hoped patron) I don't care to guess; something very rude and imprudent it must be, judging by the few lines he addressed to me. I don't mind copying them for you to read. All *my* acts are above board—as often and often Captain H. used to say, 'Your heart is in a glass-case, Jessica;' and so it is! *but my son keeps his under lock and key.*

"'Madam' (this is what *he* writes to me), 'your son has thought fit to infringe the condition upon which I agreed to assist you on his behalf. I inclose a reply to himself, which I beg you will give to his own hands without breaking the seal. Since it did not seem to you indiscreet to communicate to a boy of his years letters written solely to yourself, you can not blame me if I take your implied estimate of his capacity to judge for himself of the nature of a correspondence, and of the views and temper of, Madam, your very obedient servant.' And that's all, to me. I send his letter to you—seal unbroken. I conclude he has done with you forever, and *your* CAREER *is lost!* But if it be so, oh, my poor, poor child! at that thought I have not the heart to scold you farther. If it be so, come home to me, and I'll work and slave for you, and you shall keep up your head and be a gentleman still, as you are, every inch of you. Don't mind what I've said at the beginning, dear—don't! you know I'm hasty, and I was *hurt*. But you could not mean to be sly and underhand—'twas only your high spirit—and it was *my* fault; I should not have shown you the letters. I hope you are well, and have quite lost that nasty cough, and that Mr. Vance treats you with proper respect. I think him rather too pushing and familiar, though a pleasant young man on the whole.

But, after all, he is only a painter. Bless you, my child, and don't have secrets again from your poor mother, JESSICA HAUGHTON."

The inclosed letter was as follows:

"LIONEL HAUGHTON,—Some men might be displeased at receiving such a letter as you have addressed to me; I am not. At your years, and under the same circumstances, I might have written a letter much in the same spirit. Relieve your mind—as yet you owe me no obligations; you have only received back a debt due to you. My father was poor; your grandfather, Robert Haughton, assisted him in the cost of my education. I have assisted your father's son; we are quits. Before, however, we decide on having done with each other for the future. I suggest to you to pay me a short visit. Probably I shall not like you, nor you me. But we are both gentlemen, and need not show dislike too coarsely. If you decide on coming, come at once, or possibly you may not find me here. If you refuse, I shall have a poor opinion of your sense and temper, and in a week I shall have forgotten your existence. I ought to add that your father and I were once warm friends, and that by descent I am the head not only of my own race, which ends with me, but of the Haughton family, of which, though your line assumed the name, it was but a younger branch. Nowadays young men are probably not brought up to care for these things—I was. Yours,

"GUY HAUGHTON DARRELL.

"Manor House, Fawley."

Sophy picked up the fallen letters, placed them on Lionel's lap, and looked into his face wistfully. He smiled, resumed his mother's epistle, and read the concluding passages which he had before omitted. Their sudden turn from reproof to tenderness melted him. He began to feel that his mother had a right to blame him for an act of concealment. Still she never would have consented to his writing such a letter; and had that letter been attended with so ill a result? Again he read Mr. Darrell's blunt but not offensive lines. His pride was soothed—why should he not now love his father's friend? He rose briskly, paid for the fruit, and went his way back to the boat with Sophy. As his oars cut the wave he talked gayly, but he ceased to interrogate Sophy on her past. Energetic, sanguine, ambitious, his own future entered now into his thoughts. Still, when the sun sunk as the inn came partially into view from the winding of the banks and the fringe of the willows, his mind again settled on the patient, quiet little girl, who had not ventured to ask him one question in return for all he had put so unceremoniously to her. Indeed, she was silently musing over words he had inconsiderately let fall—"What I hate to think you had ever stooped to perform." Little could Lionel guess the unquiet thoughts which those words might hereafter call forth from the brooding, deepening meditations of lonely childhood! At length, said the boy, abruptly, as he had said once before—

"I wish, Sophy, you were my sister." He added, in a saddened tone, "I never had a sister—I have so longed for one! However, surely we shall meet again. You go to-morrow—so must I."

Sophy's tears flowed softly, noiselessly.

"Cheer up, lady-bird; I wish you liked me half as much as I like you!"

"I do like you—oh, so much!" cried Sophy, passionately.

"Well, then, you can write, you say?"

"A little."

"You shall write to me now and then, and I to you. I'll talk to your grandfather about it. Ah, there he is, surely!"

The boat now ran into the shelving creek, and by the honey-suckle arbor stood Gentleman Waife, leaning on his stick.

"You are late," said the actor, as they landed, and Sophy sprang into his arms. "I began to be uneasy, and came here to inquire after you. You have not caught cold, child?"

SOPHY. "Oh, no."

LIONEL. "She is the best of children. Pray, come into the inn, Mr. Waife; no toddy, but some refreshment."

WAIFE. "I thank you—no, Sir; I wish to get home at once. I walk slowly; it will be dark soon."

Lionel tried in vain to detain him. There was a certain change in Mr. Waife's manner to him; it was much more distant—it was even pettish, if not surly. Lionel could not account for it—thought it mere whim at first, but as he walked part of the way back with them toward the village, this asperity continued, nay, increased. Lionel was hurt; he arrested his steps.

"I see you wish to have your grandchild to yourself now. May I call early to-morrow? Sophy will tell you that I hope we may not altogether lose sight of each other. I will give you my address when I call."

"What time to-morrow, Sir?"

"About nine."

Waife bowed his head and walked on, but Sophy looked back toward her boy friend, sorrowfully, gratefully—twilight in the skies that had been so sunny—twilight in her face that had been so glad! She looked once, twice, thrice, as Lionel halted on the road and kissed his hand. The third time Waife said, with unwonted crossness—

"Enough of that, Sophy; looking after young men is not proper! What does he mean about 'seeing each other, and giving me his address?'"

"He wished me to write to him sometimes, and he would write to me."

Waife's brow contracted; but if, in the excess of grandfatherly caution, he could have supposed that the bright-hearted boy of seventeen meditated ulterior ill to that fairy child in such a scheme for correspondence, he must have been in his dotage, and he had not hitherto evinced any signs of that.

Farewell, pretty Sophy! the evening star shines upon yon elm-tree that hides thee from view. Fading—fading grows the summer landscape; faded already from the landscape thy gentle image! So ends a holiday in life. Hallow it, Sophy; hallow it, Lionel. Life's holidays are not too many!

CHAPTER XVII.

By this chapter it appeareth that he who sets out on a career can scarcely expect to walk in perfect comfort, if he exchange his own thick-soled shoes for dress-boots which were made for another man's measure, and that the said boots may not the less pinch for being brilliantly varnished.—It also showeth for the instruction of Men and States, the connection between democratic opinion and wounded self-love; so that, if some Liberal statesman desire to rouse against an aristocracy the class just below it, he has only to persuade a fine lady to be exceedingly civil "to that sort of people."

VANCE, returning late at night, found his friend still up in the little parlor, the windows open, pacing the floor with restless strides, stopping now and then to look at the moon upon the river.

"Such a day as I have had! and twelve shillings for the fly, 'pikes not included," said Vance, much out of humor.

"'I fly from plate, I fly from pomp,
I fly from falsehood's specious grin;'

I forget the third line; I know the last is,

'To find my welcome at an inn.'

You are silent: I annoyed you by going—could not help it—pity me, and lock up your pride."

"No, my dear Vance, I was hurt for a moment—but that's long since over!"

"Still you seem to have something on your mind," said Vance, who had now finished reading his letters, lighted his cigar, and was leaning against the window as the boy continued to walk to and fro.

"That is true—I have. I should like your advice. Read that letter. Ought I to go?—would it look mercenary—grasping? You know what I mean."

Vance approached the candles, and took the letter. He glanced first at the signature. "Darrell!" he exclaimed. "Oh, it is so, then!" He read with great attention, put down the letter, and shook Lionel by the hand. "I congratulate you; all is settled as it should be. Go? of course—you would be an ill-mannered lout if you did not. Is it far from hence—must you return to town first?"

LIONEL. "No! I find I can get across the country—two hours by the railway. There is a station at the town which bears the postmark of the letter. I shall make for that, if you advise it."

"You knew I should advise it, or you would not have made those researches into Bradshaw."

"Shrewdly said," answered Lionel, laughing; "but I wished for your sanction of my crude impressions."

"You never told me your cousin's name was Darrell—not that I should have been much wiser, if you had, but, thunder and lightning, Lionel, do you know that your cousin Darrell is a famous man?"

LIONEL. "Famous!—nonsense. I suppose he was a good lawyer, for I have heard my mother say, with a sort of contempt, that he had made a great fortune at the bar!"

VANCE. "But he was in Parliament."

LIONEL. "Was he? I did not know."

VANCE. "And this is senatorial fame! You never heard your school-fellows talk of Mr. Darrell?—they would not have known his name if you had boasted of it!"

LIONEL. "Certainly not."

VANCE. "Would your school-fellows have known the names of Wilkie, of Landseer, of Turner, Maclise—I speak of Painters!"

LIONEL. "I should think so, indeed."

VANCE (soliloquizing). "And yet Her Serene Sublimityship, Lady Selina Vipont, says to me with divine compassion, 'Not in the way of your delightful art to know such men as Mr. Darrell!' Oh, as if I did not see through it—oh, as if I did not see through it too when she said, apropos of my jean cap and velveteen jacket, 'What matters how *you* dress? Every one knows who you are!' Would she have said that to the Earl of Dunder, or even to Sir Jasper Stollhead? No. I am the painter Frank Vance—nothing more nor less; and if I stood on my head in a check shirt and a sky-colored apron, Lady Selina Vipont would kindly murmur, 'Only Frank Vance the painter—what does it signify?' Aha!—and they think to put me to use!—puppets and lay figures!—it is I who put them to use! Harkye, Lionel, you are nearer akin to these fine folks than I knew of. Promise me one thing: you may become of their set, by right of your famous Mr. Darrell; if ever you hear an artist, musician, scribbler, no matter what, ridiculed as a tuft-hunter—seeking the great—and so forth—before you join in the laugh, ask some great man's son, with a pedigree that dates from the Ark, 'Are you not a toad-eater too? Do you want political influence?—do you stand contested elections?—do you curry and fawn upon greasy Sam the butcher, and grimy Tom the blacksmith for a vote? Why? useful to your career—necessary to your ambition!' Aha! is it meaner to curry and fawn upon whitehanded women and elegant coxcombs? Tut, tut! useful to a career—necessary to ambition?" Vance paused, out of breath. The spoiled darling of the circles—he—to talk such radical rubbish! Certainly he must have taken his two guineas' worth out of those light wines. Nothing so treacherous! they inflame the brain like fire, while melting on the palate like ice. All inhabitants of light-wine countries are quarrelsome and democratic.

LIONEL (astounded). "No one, I am sure, could have meant to call you a tuft-hunter—of course, every one knows that a great painter—"

VANCE. "Dates from Michael Angelo, if not from Zeuxis! Common individuals trace their pedigree from their own fathers!—the children of Art from Art's founders!"

Oh Vance, Vance, you are certainly drunk! If that comes from dining with fine people at the Star and Garter, you would be a happier man and as good a painter if you sipped your toddy in honey-suckle arbors.

"But," said Lionel, bewildered, and striving to turn his friend's thoughts, "what has all this to do with Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE. "Mr. Darrell might have been one of the first men in the kingdom. Lady Selina Vipont says so, and she is related, I believe, to every member in the Cabinet. Mr. Darrell can push you in life, and make your fortune, without any great trouble on your own part. Bless your stars, and rejoice that you are not a painter!"

Lionel flung his arm round the artist's broad breast. "Vance, you are cruel!" It was his

turn to console the painter, as the painter had three nights before (apropos of the same Mr. Darrell) consoled him. Vance gradually sobered down, and the young men walked forth in the moonlight. And the eternal stars had the same kind looks for Vance as they had vouchsafed to Lionel.

"When do you start?" asked the painter, as they mounted the stairs to bed.

"To-morrow evening. I miss the early train, for I must call first and take leave of Sophy. I hope I may see her again in after-life."

"And I hope, for your sake, that if so, she may not be in the same colored print with Lady Selina Vipont's eyeglass upon her!"

"What!" said Lionel, laughing; "is Lady Selina Vipont so formidably rude?"

"Rude! nobody is rude in that delightful set. Lady Selina Vipont is excruciatingly—civil."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Being devoted exclusively to a reflection, not inapposite to the events in this history, nor to those in any other which chronicles the life of man.

THERE is one warning lesson in life which few of us have not received, and no book that I can call to memory has noted down with an adequate emphasis. It is this, "Beware of parting!" The true sadness is not in the pain of the parting, it is in the When and the How you are to meet again with the face about to vanish from your view! From the passionate farewell to the woman who has your heart in her keeping, to the cordial good-by exchanged with pleasant companions at a watering-place, a country-house, or the close of a festive day's blithe and careless excursion—a cord, stronger or weaker, is snapped asunder in every parting, and Time's busy fingers are not practiced in resplicing broken ties. Meet again you may: will it be in the same way?—with the same sympathies?—with the same sentiments? Will the souls, hurrying on in diverse paths, unite once more, as if the interval had been a dream? Rarely, rarely! Have you not, after even a year, even a month's absence, returned to the same place, found the same groups reassembled, and yet sighed to yourself, "But where is the charm that once breathed from the spot, and once smiled from the faces? A poet has said—"Eternity itself can not restore the loss struck from the minute." Are you happy in the spot on which you tarry with the persons whose voices are now melodious to your ear?—beware of parting; or, if part you must, say not in insolent defiance to Time and Destiny—"What matters?—we shall soon meet again."

Alas, and alas! when we think of the lips which murmured, "Soon meet again," and remember how, in heart, soul, and thought, we stood forever divided the one from the other, when, once more face to face, we each inly exclaimed—"Met again!"

The air that we breathe makes the medium through which sound is conveyed; be the instrument unchanged, be the force which is applied to it the same, still, the air that thou seest not, the air to thy ear gives the music.

Ring a bell underneath an exhausted receiver, thou wilt scarce hear the sound; give a bell due vibration by free air in warm daylight, or sink it down to the heart of the ocean, where the air, all compressed, fills the vessel around it,* and the chime, heard afar, starts thy soul, checks thy footstep—unto deep calls the deep—a voice from the ocean is borne to thy soul.

Where, then, the change, when thou sayest, "Lo, the same metal—why so faint-heard the ringing?" Ask the air that thou seest not, or above thee in the sky, or below thee in ocean. Art thou sure that the bell, so faint-heard, is not struck underneath an exhausted receiver?

CHAPTER XIX.

The wandering inclinations of Nomad Tribes not to be accounted for on the principles of action peculiar to civilized men, who are accustomed to live in good houses and able to pay the income-tax.—When the money that once belonged to a man civilized vanishes into the pockets of a nomad, neither lawful art nor occult science can, with certainty, discover what he will do with it.—Mr. Vance narrowly escapes well-merited punishment from the nails of the British Fair.—Lionel Haughton, in the temerity of youth, braves the dangers of a British railway.

THE morning was dull and overcast, rain gathering in the air, when Vance and Lionel walked to Waife's lodging. As Lionel placed his hand on the knocker of the private door, the Cobbler, at his place by the window in the stall beside, glanced toward him, and shook his head.

"No use knocking, gentlemen. Will you kindly step in?—this way."

"Do you mean that your lodgers are out?" asked Vance.

"Gone!" said the Cobbler, thrusting his awl with great vehemence through the leather destined to the repair of a plowman's boot.

"Gone—for good!" cried Lionel; "you can not mean it. I call by appointment."

"Sorry, Sir, for your trouble. Stop a bit; I have a letter here for you." The Cobbler dived into a drawer, and, from a medley of nails and thongs, drew forth a letter addressed to L. Haughton, Esq.

"Is this from Waife? How on earth did he know my surname? you never mentioned it, Vance?"

"Not that I remember. But you said you found him at the inn, and they knew it there. It is on the brass plate of your knapsack. No matter—what does he say?" and Vance looked over his friend's shoulder and read:

"SIR,—I most respectfully thank you for your condescending kindness to me and my grandchild; and your friend, for his timely and generous aid. You will pardon me, that the necessity which knows no law obliges me to leave this place some hours before the time of your proposed visit. My grandchild says you intended to ask her sometimes to write to you. Excuse me, Sir: on reflection, you will perceive how different your ways of life are from those which she must tread with me. You see before you a man who—but I forget—you see him no more, and probably never will. Your most humble and most obliged obedient servant, W. W."

* The bell in a sunk diving-bell, where the air is compressed, sounds with increased power. Sound travels four times quicker in water than in the upper air.

VANCE. "Who never more may trouble you, trouble you! Where have they gone?"

COBBLER. "Don't know; would you like to take a peep in the crystal? perhaps you've the gift, unbeknown."

VANCE. "Not I—Bah! Come away, Lionel."

"Did not Sophy even leave any message for me?" asked the boy, sorrowfully.

"To be sure she did; I forgot—no, not exactly a message, but this—I was to be sure to give it to you." And, out of his miscellaneous receptacle the Cobbler extracted a little book. Vance looked and laughed—"*The Butterflies' Ball and the Grasshoppers' Feast.*"

Lionel did not share the laugh. He plucked the book to himself, and read on the fly-leaf, in a child's irregular scrawl, blistered too with the unmistakable trace of fallen tears, these words:

"Do not Scorn it. I have nothing else I can think of which is All Mine. Miss Jane Burton gave it me for being Goode. Grandfather says you are too high for us, and that I shall not see you More; but I shall never forget how kind you were—never—never.—SOPHY."

Said the Cobbler, his awl upright in the hand which rested on his knee, "What a plague did the 'Stronomers discover Herschell for? You see, Sir," addressing Vance, "things odd and strange all come along o' Herschell."

"What!—Sir John?"

"No, the star he poked out. He's a awful star for females!—hates 'em like poison! I suspect he's been worriting hisself into her nativity, for I got out from her the year, month, and day she was born—hour unbeknown—but, calkelating by noon, Herschell was dead agin her in the Third and Ninth House—voyages, travels, letters, news, church matters, and sichlike. But it will all come right after he's transited. Her Jupiter must be good. But I only hope," added the Cobbler, solemnly, "that they won't go a discovering any more stars. The world did a deal better without the new one, and they do talk of a Neptune—as bad as Saturn!"

"And this is the last of her!" said Lionel, sadly putting the book into his breast-pocket. "Heaven shield her wherever she goes!"

VANCE. "Don't you think Waife and the poor little girl will come back again?"

COBBLER. "P'raps; I know he was looking hard into the county map at the stationer's over the way; that seems as if he did not mean to go very far. P'raps he may come back."

VANCE. "Did he take all his goods with him?"

COBBLER. "Barrin' an old box—nothing in it, I expect, but theatre rubbish—play-books, paints, an old wig, and sichlike. He has good clothes—always had; and so has she, but they don't make more than a bundle."

VANCE. "But surely you must know what the old fellow's project is. He has got from me a great sum—what will he do with it?"

COBBLER. "Just what has been a bothering me. What will he do with it? I cast a figure to know—could not make it out. Strange signs in Twelfth House. Enemies and big animals. Well, well, he's a marbellous man, and if he warn't a misbeliever in the crystal, I should say he was under Herschell; for you see, Sir" (laying hold of Vance's button, as he saw that gentleman turning to escape)—"you see Herschell, though he be a sinister chap eno', specially in affairs connected with 'tother sex, disposes the native to dive into the mysteries of natur. I'm a Herschell man, out and outer! Born in March, and—"

"As mad as its hares," muttered Vance, wrenching his button from the Cobbler's grasp, and impatiently striding off. But he did not effect his escape so easily, for, close at hand, just at the corner of the lane, a female group, headed by Merle's gaunt housekeeper, had been silently collecting from the moment the two friends had paused at the Cobbler's door. And this petticoated divan suddenly closing round the painter, one pulled him by the sleeve, another by the jacket, and a third, with a nose upon which somebody had sat in early infancy, whispered, "Please, Sir, take my picter fust."

Vance stared aghast—"Your picture, you drab!" Here another model of rustic charms, who might have furnished an ideal for the fat scullion in *Tristram Shandy*, bobbing a courtesy, put in her rival claim.

"Sir, if you don't objex to coming in to the kitching, after the family has gone to bed, I don't care if I lets you make a minnytur of me for two pounds."

"Miniature of you, porpoise!"

"Polly, Sir, not Porpus—ax pardon. I shall clean myself, and I have a butyful new cap—Honeytun, and—"

"Let the gentleman go, will you?" said a third; "I am supprised at ye, Polly. The kitching unbeknown! Sir, I'm in the nussary—yes, Sir—and missus says you may take me any time, purvided you'll take the babby, in the back parlor—yes, Sir. No. 5 in the High Street. Mrs. Spratt—yes, Sir. Babby has had the small-pox—in case you're a married gentleman with a family—quite safe there—yes, Sir."

Vance could endure no more, and, forgetful of that gallantry which should never desert the male sex, burst through the phalanx with an anathema, blackening alike the beauty and the virtue of those on whom it fell—that would have justified a cry of shame from every manly bosom, and at once changed into shrill wrath the supplicatory tones with which he had been hitherto addressed. Down the street he hurried, and down the street followed the insulted fair. "Hiss—hiss—no gentleman, no gentleman! Aha—skulk off—do—low blaggurd!" shrieked Polly. From their counters shop-folks rushed to their doors. Stray dogs, excited by the clamor, ran wildly after the fugitive man, yelping "in madding bray!" Vance, fearing to be clawed by the females if he merely walked, sure to be bitten by the dogs if he ran, ambled on, strove to look composed, and carry his nose high in its native air, till, clearing the street, he saw a hedgerow to the right—leaped it with an agility which no stimulus less preternatural than that of self-preservation could have given to his limbs, and then shot off like an arrow, and did not stop till, out of breath, he dropped upon the bench in the sheltering honey-suckle arbor. Here he was still fanning himself with his cap, and muttering unmentionable expletives, when he was joined by Lionel, who had tarried behind to talk more about Sophy to the Cobbler, and who, unconscious that the din which smote his ear was caused by his ill-starred friend, had

been enticed to go up stairs and look after Sophy in the crystal—vainly. When Vance had recited his misadventures, and Lionel had sufficiently condoled with him, it became time for the latter to pay his share of the bill, pack up his knapsack, and start for the train. Now the station could only be reached by penetrating the heart of the village, and Vance swore that he had had enough of that. "*Peste!*" said he; "I should pass right before No. 5 in the High Street, and the nuss and the babby will be there on the threshold, like Virgil's picture of the infernal regions—

'Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo.'

We will take leave of each other here. I shall go by the boat to Chertsey whenever I shall have sufficiently recovered my shaken nerves. There are one or two picturesque spots to be seen in that neighborhood. In a few days I shall be in town; write to me there, and tell me how you get on. Shake hands, and Heaven speed you. But, ah, now you have paid your moiety of the bill, have you enough left for the train?"

"Oh, yes, the fare is but a few shillings; but, to be sure, a fly to Fawley? I ought not to go on foot" (proudly); "and, too, supposing he affronts me, and I have to leave his house suddenly? May I borrow a sovereign? my mother will call and repay it."

Vance (magnificently). "There it is, and not much more left in my purse—that cursed Star and Garter! and those three pounds!"

Lionel (sighing). "Which were so well spent! Before you sell that picture, do let me make a copy."

Vance. "Better take a model of your own. Village full of them; you could bargain with a porpoise for half the money which I was duped into squandering away on a chit! But don't look so grave; you may copy me if you can!"

"Time to start, and must walk brisk, Sir," said the jolly landlord, looking in.

"Good-by, good-by."

And so departed Lionel Haughton upon an emprise as momentous to that youth-errant as Perilous Bridge or Dragon's Cave could have been to knight-errant of old.

"Before we decide on having done with each other, a short visit"—so ran the challenge from him who had every thing to give unto him who had every thing to gain. And how did Lionel Haughton, the ambitious and aspiring, contemplate the venture in which success would admit him within the gates of the golden Carduel an equal in the lists with the sons of paladins, or throw him back to the arms of the widow who let a first floor in the back streets of Pimlico? Truth to say, as he strode musingly toward the station for starting, where the smoke-cloud now curled from the wheel-track of iron—truth to say, the anxious doubt which disturbed him was not that which his friends might have felt on his behalf. In words, it would have shaped itself thus, "Where *is* that poor little Sophy! and what will become of her—what?" But, when, launched on the journey, hurried on to its goal, the thought of the ordeal before him forced itself on his mind, he muttered inly to himself, "Done with each other; let it be as he pleases, so that I do not fawn on his pleasure. Better a million times enter life as a penniless gentleman, who must work his way up like a man, than as one who creeps on his knees into fortune, shaming birthright of gentleman, or soiling honor of man." Therefore taking into account the poor cousin's vigilant pride on the *qui vive* for offense, and the rich cousin's temper (as judged by his letters) rude enough to present it, we must own that if Lionel Haughton has at this moment what is commonly called "a chance," the question as yet is not, what is that chance, but *what will he do with it?* And as the reader advances in this history, he will acknowledge that there are few questions in this world so frequently agitated, to which the solution is more important to each puzzled mortal, than that upon which starts every sage's discovery, every novelist's plot—that which applies to MAN'S LIFE, from its first sleep in the cradle, "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Primitive character of the country in certain districts of Great Britain.—Connection between the features of surrounding scenery and the mental and moral inclinations of man, after the fashion of all sound Ethnological Historians.—A charioteer, to whom an experience of British Laws suggests an ingenious mode of arresting the progress of Roman Papacy, carries Lionel Haughton and his fortunes to a place which allows of description and invites repose.

In safety, but with naught else rare enough, in a railway train, to deserve commemoration, Lionel reached the station to which he was bound. He there inquired the distance to Fawley Manor House; it was five miles. He ordered a fly, and was soon wheeled briskly along a rough parish-road, through a country strongly contrasting the gay River Scenery he had so lately quitted. Quite as English, but rather the England of a former race than that which spreads round our own generation like one vast suburb of garden-ground and villas—Here, nor village, nor spire, nor porter's lodge came in sight. Rare even were the corn-fields—wide spaces of uninclosed common opened, solitary and primitive, on the road, bordered by large woods, chiefly of beech, closing the horizon with ridges of undulating green. In such an England, Knights-Templars might have wended their way to scattered monasteries, or fugitive partisans in the bloody Wars of the Roses have found shelter under leafy coverts.

The scene had its romance, its beauty—half-savage, half-gentle—leading perforce the mind of any cultivated and imaginative gazer far back from the present day—waking up long-forgotten passages from old poets. The stillness of such wastes of sward—such deeps of woodland—induced the nurture of reverie, gravely soft and lulling. There, Ambition might give rest to the wheel of Ixion, Avarice to the sieve of the Danaids; there, disappointed Love might muse on the brevity of all human passions, and count over the tortured hearts that have found peace in holy meditation, or are now stilled under grassy knolls. See where, at the crossing of three roads upon the waste, the landscape suddenly unfolds—an upland in the distance, and on the upland a building, the first sign of social man. What is the building? only a silenced wind-mill—the sails dark and sharp against the dull, leaden sky.

Lionel touched the driver—"Are we yet on Mr. Darrell's property?" Of the extent of that property he had involuntarily conceived a vast idea.

"Lord, Sir, no; we be two miles from Squire Darrell's. He han't much property to speak of hereabouts. But he bought a good bit o' land, too, some years ago, ten or twelve mile t'other side o' the county. First time you are going to Fawley, Sir?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I don't mind seeing you afore—and I should have known you if I had, for it is seldom indeed I have a fare to Fawley old Manor House. It must be, I take it, four or five year ago sin' I wor there with a gent, and he went away while I wor feeding the horse—did me out o' my back fare. What bisness had he to walk when he came in my fly?—Shabby."

"Mr. Darrell lives very retired, then—sees few persons?"

"'Spose so. I never see'd him, as I knows on; see'd two o' his hosses though—rare good uns;" and the driver whipped on his own horse, took to whistling, and Lionel asked no more.

At length the chaise stopped at a carriage-gate, receding from the road, and deeply shadowed by venerable trees—no lodge. The driver, dismounting, opened the gate.

"Is this the place?"

The driver nodded assent, remounted, and drove on rapidly through what might, by courtesy, be called a park. The inclosure was indeed little beyond that of a good-sized paddock—its boundaries were visible on every side—but swelling uplands, covered with massy foliage, sloped down to its wild, irregular turf soil—soil poor for pasturage, but pleasant to the eye; with dell and dingle, bosks of fantastic pollards—dotted oaks of vast growth—here and there a weird hollow thorn-tree—patches of fern and gorse. Hoarse and loud cawed the rooks—and deep, deep as from the innermost core of the lovely woodlands, came the mellow notes of the cuckoo. A few moments more a wind of the road brought the house in sight. At its rear lay a piece of water, scarcely large enough to be styled a lake: —too winding in its shaggy banks—its ends too concealed by tree and islet to be called by the dull name of pond. Such as it was, it arrested the eye before the gaze turned toward the house —it had an air of tranquillity so sequestered, so solemn. A lively man of the world would have been seized with spleen at the first glimpse of it. But he who had known some great grief—some anxious care—would have drunk the calm into his weary soul like an anodyne. The house —small, low, ancient, about the date of Edward VI., before the statelier architecture of Elizabeth. Few houses in England so old, indeed, as Fawley Manor House. A vast weight of roof, with high gables—windows on the upper story projecting far over the lower part—a covered porch with a coat of half-obliterated arms deep panneled over the oak door. Nothing grand, yet all how venerable! But what is this? Close beside the old, quiet, unassuming Manor House, rises the skeleton of a superb and costly pile—a palace uncompleted, and the work evidently suspended—perhaps long since, perhaps now forever. No busy workmen nor animated scaffolding. The perforated battlements roofed over with visible haste—here with slate, there with tile; the Elizabethan mullion casements unglazed; some roughly boarded across—some with staring, forlorn apertures, that showed

floorless chambers—for winds to whistle through and rats to tenant. Weeds and long grass were growing over blocks of stone that lay at hand. A wallflower had forced itself into root on the sill of a giant oriel. The effect was startling. A fabric which he who conceived it must have founded for posterity—so solid its masonry, so thick its walls—and thus abruptly left to moulder—a palace constructed for the reception of crowding guests—the pomp of stately revels—abandoned to owl and bat. And the homely old house beside it, which that lordly hall was doubtless designed to replace, looking so safe and tranquil at the baffled presumption of its spectral neighbor.

The driver had rung the bell, and now, turning back to the chaise, met Lionel's inquiring eye, and said—"Yes; Squire Darrell began to build that—many years ago—when I was a boy. I heerd say it was to be the show-house of the whole county. Been stopped these ten or a dozen years."

"Why?—do you know?"

"No one knows. Squire was a larver, I b'leve—perhaps he put it into Chancery. My wife's grandfather was put into Chancery jist as he was growing up, and never grew afterward—never got out o' it—nont ever does. There's our churchwarden comes to me with a petition to sign agin the Pope. Says I, 'That old Pope is always in trouble—what's he bin doin' now?' Says he, 'Spreading! He's got into Parlyment, and he's now got a colledge, and we pays for it. I doesn't know how to stop him.' Says I. 'Put the Pope into Chancery along with wife's grandfather, and he'll never hold up his head agin.'"

The driver had thus just disposed of the Papacy when an elderly servant, out of livery, opened the door. Lionel sprung from the chaise, and paused in some confusion—for then, for the first time, there darted across him the idea that he had never written to announce his acceptance of Mr. Darrell's invitation—that he ought to have done so—that he might not be expected. Meanwhile the servant surveyed him with some surprise. "Mr. Darrell?" hesitated Lionel, inquiringly.

"Not at home, Sir," replied the man, as if Lionel's business was over, and he had only to re-enter his chaise. The boy was naturally rather bold than shy, and he said, with a certain assured air, "My name is Haughton. I come here on Mr. Darrell's invitation."

The servant's face changed in a moment—he bowed respectfully. "I beg pardon, Sir. I will look for my master—he is somewhere on the grounds." The servant then approached the fly, took out the knapsack, and observing Lionel had his purse in his hand, said—"Allow me to save you that trouble, Sir. Driver, round to the stable-yard." Stepping back into the house, the servant threw open a door to the left, on entrance, and advanced a chair—"If you will wait here a moment, Sir, I will see for my master."

CHAPTER II.

Guy Darrell—and Still'd Life.

The room in which Lionel now found himself was singularly quaint. An antiquarian or architect would have discovered at a glance that, at some period, it had formed part of the entrance-hall; and when, in Elizabeth's or James the First's day, the refinement in manners began to penetrate from baronial mansions to the homes of the gentry, and the entrance-hall ceased to be the common refectory of the owner and his dependents, this apartment had been screened off by perforated panels, which, for the sake of warmth and comfort, had been filled up into solid wainscot by a succeeding generation. Thus one side of the room was richly carved with geometrical designs and arabesque pilasters, while the other three sides were in small simple panels, with a deep fantastic frieze in plaster, depicting a deer-chase in relief, and running between woodwork and ceiling. The ceiling itself was relieved by long pendants without any apparent meaning, and by the crest of the Darrels, a heron, wreathed round with the family motto, "*Ardua petit Ardea.*" It was a dining-room, as was shown by the character of the furniture. But there was no attempt on the part of the present owner, and had clearly been none on the part of his predecessor, to suit the furniture to the room. This last was of the heavy graceless taste of George the First—cumbrous chairs in walnut-tree—with a worm-eaten mosaic of the heron on their homely backs, and a faded blue worsted on their seats—a marvelous ugly sideboard to match, and on it a couple of black shagreen cases, the lids of which were flung open, and discovered the pistol-shaped handles of silver knives. The mantle-piece reached to the ceiling, in paneled compartments, with heraldic shields, and supported by rude stone Caryatides. On the walls were several pictures—family portraits, for the names were inscribed on the frames. They varied in date from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George I. A strong family likeness pervaded them all—high features, dark hair, grave aspects—save indeed one, a Sir Ralph Haughton Darrell, in a dress that spoke him of the holiday date of Charles II.—all knots, lace, and ribbons; evidently the beau of the race; and he had blue eyes, a blonde peruke, a careless profligate smile, and looked altogether as devil-me-care, rakehelly, handsome, good-for-naught, as ever swore at a drawer, beat a watchman, charmed a lady, terrified a husband, and hummed a song as he pinked his man.

Lionel was still gazing upon the effigies of this airy cavalier, when the door behind him opened very noiselessly, and a man of imposing presence stood on the threshold—stood so still, and the carved mouldings of the door-way so shadowed, and, as it were, cased round his figure, that Lionel, on turning quickly, might have mistaken him for a portrait brought into bold relief, from its frame, by a sudden fall of light. We hear it, indeed, familiarly said that such a one is like an old picture. Never could it be more appositely said than of the face on which the young visitor gazed, much startled and somewhat awed. Not such as inferior limners had painted in the portraits there, though it had something in common with those family lineaments, but such as might have looked tranquil power out of the canvas of Titian.

The man stepped forward, and the illusion

passed. "I thank you," he said, holding out his hand, "for taking me at my word, and answering me thus in person." He paused a moment, surveying Lionel's countenance with a keen but not unkindly eye, and added softly, "Very like your father."

At these words Lionel involuntarily pressed the hand which he had taken. That hand did not return the pressure. It lay an instant in Lionel's warm clasp—not repelling, not responding—and was then very gently withdrawn.

"Did you come from London?"

"No, Sir, I found your letter yesterday at Hampton Court. I had been staying some days in that neighborhood. I came on this morning—I was afraid, too unceremoniously; your kind welcome reassures me then."

The words were well chosen, and frankly said. Probably they pleased the host, for the expression of his countenance was, on the whole, propitious; but he merely inclined his head with a kind of lofty indifference, then, glancing at his watch, he rang the bell. The servant entered promptly. "Let dinner be served within an hour."

"Pray, Sir," said Lionel, "do not change your hours on my account."

Mr. Darrell's brow slightly contracted. Lionel's tact was in fault there; but the great man answered quietly, "All hours are the same to me; and it were strange if a host could be deranged by consideration to his guest—on the first day too. Are you tired? Would you like to go to your room, or look out for half an hour? The sky is clearing."

"I should so like to look out, Sir."

"This way, then."

Mr. Darrell, crossing the hall, threw open a door opposite to that by which Lionel entered, and the lake (we will so call it) lay before them. Separated from the house only by a shelving, gradual declivity, on which were a few beds of flowers—not the most in vogue nowadays—and disposed in rambling, old-fashioned parterres. At one angle a quaint and dilapidated sun-dial; at the other a long bowling-alley, terminated by one of those summer-houses which the Dutch taste, following the Revolution of 1688, brought into fashion. Mr. Darrell passed down this alley (no bowls there now), and, observing that Lionel looked curiously toward the summer-house, of which the doors stood open, entered it. A lofty room, with coved ceiling, painted with Roman trophies of helms and fasces, alternated with crossed fifes and fiddles, painted also.

"Amsterdam manners," said Mr. Darrell, slightly shrugging his shoulders. "Here a former race heard music, sung glees, and smoked from clay pipes. That age soon passed, unsuited to English energies, which are not to be united with Holland phlegm! But the view from the window—look out there. I wonder whether men in wigs and women in hoops enjoyed *that*. It is a mercy they did not clip those banks into a straight canal!"

The view was indeed lovely; the water looked so blue, and so large, and so limpid, woods and curving banks reflected deep on its peaceful bosom.

"How Vance would enjoy this!" cried Lionel. "It would come into a picture even better than the Thames."

"Vance—who is Vance?"

"The artist—a great friend of mine. Surely, Sir, you have heard of him, or seen his pictures?"

"Himself and his pictures are since my time. Days tread down days for the Recluse, and he forgets that celebrities rise with their suns, to wane with their moons—

'Trudítur dies die,
Novæque pergunt interire lunæ.'"

"All suns do not set—all moons do not wane!" cried Lionel, with blunt enthusiasm. "When Horace speaks elsewhere of the Julian star, he compares it to a moon—'*interignes minores*'—and surely Fame is not among the orbs which '*pergunt interire*' hasten on to perish!"

"I am glad to see that you retain your recollection of Horace," said Mr. Darrell, frigidly, and without continuing the allusion to celebrities, "the most charming of all poets to a man of my years, and" (he very dryly added) "the most useful for popular quotation to men at any age."

Then sauntering forth carelessly, he descended the sloping turf, came to the water-side, and threw himself at length on the grass—the wild thyme which he crushed sent up its bruised fragrance. There, resting his face on his hand, Darrell gazed along the water in abstracted silence. Lionel felt that he was forgotten; but he was not hurt. By this time a strong and admiring interest for his cousin had sprung up within his breast—he would have found it difficult to explain why. But whosoever at that moment could have seen Guy Darrell's musing countenance, or whosoever, a few minutes before, could have heard the very sound of his voice—sweetly, clearly full—each slow enunciation unaffectedly, mellowly distinct—making musical the homeliest, roughest word, would have understood and shared the interest which Lionel could not explain. There are living human faces which, independently of mere physical beauty, charm and enthrall us more than the most perfect lineaments which Greek sculptor ever lent to a marble face: there are key-notes in the thrilling human voice, simply uttered, which can haunt the heart, rouse the passions, lull rampant multitudes, shake into dust the thrones of guarded kings, and effect more wonders than ever yet have been wrought by the most artful chorus or the deftest quill.

In a few minutes the swans from the farther end of the water came sailing swiftly toward the bank on which Darrell reclined. He had evidently made friends with them, and they rested their white breasts close on the margin, seeking to claim his notice with a low hissing salutation, which, it is to be hoped, they change for something less sibilant in that famous song with which they depart this life.

Darrell looked up. "They come to be fed," said he, "smooth emblems of the great social union. Affection is the offspring of utility. I am useful to them—they love me." He rose, uncovered, and bowed to the birds in mock courtesy: "Friends, I have no bread to give you."

LIONEL. "Let me run in for some: I would be useful too."

MR. DARRELL. "Rival! useful to my swans?"

LIONEL (tenderly). "Or to you, Sir."

He felt as if he had said too much, and without waiting for permission, ran in-doors to find some one whom he could ask for the bread.

"Sonless, childless, hopeless, objectless!" said Darrell, murmuringly, to himself, and sunk again into reverie.

By the time Lionel returned with the bread, another petted friend had joined the master. A tame doe had caught sight of him from her covert far away, came in light bounds to his side, and was pushing her delicate nostril into his drooping hand. At the sound of Lionel's hurried step she took flight, trotted off a few paces, then turned, looking wistfully.

"I did not know you had deer here."

"Deer! in this little paddock! of course not; only that doe. Fairthorn introduced her here. By-the-by," continued Darrell, who was now throwing the bread to the swans, and had resumed his careless, unmeditative manner, "you were not aware that I have a brother hermit—a companion besides the swans and the doe. Dick Fairthorn is a year or two younger than myself, the son of my father's bailiff. He was the cleverest boy at his grammar-school. Unluckily he took to the flute, and unfitted himself for the present century. He condescends, however, to act as my secretary—a fair classical scholar—plays chess—is useful to me—I am useful to him. We have an affection for each other. I never forgive any one who laughs at him. The half-hour bell, and you will meet him at dinner. Shall we come in and dress?"

They entered the house—the same man-servant was in attendance in the hall. "Show Mr. Haughton to his room." Darrell inclined his head—I use that phrase, for the gesture was neither bow nor nod—turned down a narrow passage, and disappeared.

Led up an uneven stair-case of oak, black as ebony, with huge balustrades, and newel-posts supporting clumsy balls, Lionel was conducted to a small chamber, modernized a century ago by a faded Chinese paper, and a mahogany bedstead, which took up three-fourths of the space, and was crested with dingy plumes, that gave it the cheerful look of a hearse; and there the attendant said, "Have you the key of your knapsack, Sir? shall I put out your things to dress?" Dress! Then for the first time the boy remembered that he had brought with him no evening-dress—nay, evening-dress, properly so called, he possessed not at all in any corner of the world. It had never yet entered into his modes of existence. Call to mind when you were a boy of seventeen, "betwixt two ages hovering like a star," and imagine Lionel's sensations. He felt his cheek burn as if he had been detected in a crime. "I have no dress things," he said, piteously; "only a change of linen, and this," glancing at the summer jacket. The servant was evidently a most gentlemanlike man—his native sphere that of groom of the chambers. "I will mention it to Mr. Darrell; and if you will favor me with your address in London, I will send to telegraph for what you want against to-morrow."

"Many thanks," answered Lionel, recovering his presence of mind; "I will speak to Mr. Darrel myself."

"There is the hot water, Sir; that is the bell. I have the honor to be placed at your commands." The door closed, and Lionel unlocked his knapsack—other trowsers, other waistcoat, had he—those worn at the fair, and once white. Alas! they had not since then passed to the care of the laundress. Other shoes—double-soled, for walking. There was no help for it, but to appear at dinner attired as he had been before, in his light pedestrian jacket, morning waistcoat flowered with sprigs, and a fawn-colored nether man. Could it signify much—only two men? Could the grave Mr. Darrell regard such trifles? Yes, if they intimated want of due respect.

Durum! sed fit levius Patientia
Quicquid corrigere est nefas.

On descending the stairs, the same high-bred domestic was in waiting to show him into the library. Mr. Darrell was there already, in the simple but punctilious costume of a gentleman who retains in seclusion the habits customary in the world. At the first glance Lionel thought he saw a slight cloud of displeasure on his host's brow. He went up to Mr. Darrell ingenuously, and apologized for the deficiencies of his itinerant wardrobe. "Say the truth," said his host; "you thought you were coming to an old churl, with whom ceremony was misplaced."

"Indeed, no!" exclaimed Lionel. "But—but I have so lately left school."

"Your mother might have thought for you."

"I did not stay to consult her, indeed, Sir; I hope you are not offended."

"No, but let me not offend you if I take advantage of my years and our relationship to remark that a young man should be careful not to let himself down below the measure of his own rank. If a king could bear to hear that he was only a ceremonial, a private gentleman may remember that there is but a ceremonial between himself and—his hatter!"

Lionel felt the color mount his brow; but Darrell, pressing the distasteful theme no farther, and seemingly forgetting its purport, turned his remarks carelessly toward the weather. "It will be fair to-morrow; there is no mist on the hill yonder. Since you have a painter for a friend, perhaps you yourself are a draughtsman. There are some landscape-effects here which Fairthorn shall point out to you."

"I fear, Mr. Darrell," said Lionel, looking down, "that to-morrow I must leave you."

"So soon? Well, I suppose the place must be very dull."

"Not that—not that; but I have offended you, and I would not repeat the offense. I have not the 'ceremonial' necessary to mark me as a gentleman, either here or at home."

"So! Bold frankness and ready wit command ceremonials," returned Darrell, and for the first time his lip wore a smile. "Let me present to you Mr. Fairthorn," as the door opening showed a shambling, awkward figure, with loose black knee-breeches and buckled shoes. The figure made a strange sidelong bow, and hurrying in a lateral course, like a crab suddenly alarmed, toward a dim recess protected by a long table, sunk behind a curtain-fold, and seemed to vanish as a crab does amidst the shingles.

"Three minutes yet to dinner, and two before the letter-carrier goes," said the host, glancing at his watch. "Mr. Fairthorn, will you write a note for me?" There was a mutter from behind the curtain. Darrell walked to the place, and

whispered a few words, returned to the hearth, rang the bell. "Another letter for the post, Mills: Mr. Fairthorn is sealing it. You are looking at my book-shelves, Lionel. As I understand that your master spoke highly of you, I presume that you are fond of reading."

"I think so, but I am not sure," answered Lionel, whom his cousin's conciliatory words had restored to ease and good-humor.

"You mean, perhaps, that you like reading, if you may choose your own books."

"Or rather if I may choose my own time to read them, and that would not be on bright summer days."

"Without sacrificing bright summer days, one finds one has made little progress when the long winter nights come."

"Yes, Sir. But must the sacrifice be paid in books? I fancy I learned as much in the playground as I did in the school-room, and for the last few months, in much my own master, reading hard, in the forenoon, it is true, for many hours at a stretch, and yet again for a few hours at evening, but rambling also through the streets, or listening to a few friends whom I have contrived to make—I think, if I can boast of any progress at all, the books have the smaller share in it."

"You would, then, prefer an active life to a studious one?"

"Oh, yes—yes."

"Dinner is served," said the decorous Mr. Mills, throwing open the door.

CHAPTER III.

In our happy country every man's house is his castle. But however stoutly he fortify it, Care enters, as surely as she did, in Horace's time, through the porticoes of a Roman's villa. Nor, whether ceilings be fretted with gold and ivory, or whether only colored with whitewash, does it matter to Care any more than it does to a house-fly. But every tree, be it cedar or blackthorn, can harbor its singing-bird; and few are the homes in which, from nooks least suspected, there starts not a music. Is it quite true that "*non* avium citharæque cantus somnum reducent?" Would not even Damocles himself have forgotten the sword, if the lute-player had chanced upon the notes that lull?

The dinner was simple enough, but well-dressed and well-served. One footman, in plain livery, assisted Mr. Mills. Darrell ate sparingly, and drank only water, which was placed by his side, iced, with a single glass of wine at the close of the repast, which he drank on bending his head to Lionel with a certain knightly grace, and the prefatory words of "Welcome here to a Haughton." Mr. Fairthorn was less abstemious—tasted of every dish, after examining it long through a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, and drank leisurely through a bottle of port, holding up every glass to the light. Darrell talked with his usual cold but not uncourteous indifference. A remark of Lionel's on the portraits in the room turned the conversation chiefly upon pictures, and the host showed himself thoroughly accomplished in the attributes of the various schools and masters. Lionel, who was very fond of the art, and, indeed, painted well for a youthful amateur, listened with great delight.

"Surely, Sir," said he, struck much with a very subtle observation upon the causes why the Italian masters admit of copyists with greater facility than the Flemish—"surely, Sir, you must yourself have practiced the art of painting?"

"Not I; but I instructed myself as a judge of pictures, because at one time I was a collector."

Fairthorn, speaking for the first time: "The rarest collection — such Albert Durers! such Holbeins! and that head by Leonardo da Vinci!" He stopped—looked extremely frightened—helped himself to the port—turning his back upon his host, to hold, as usual, the glass to the light.

"Are they here, Sir?" asked Lionel.

Darrell's face darkened, and he made no answer; but his head sank on his breast, and he seemed suddenly absorbed in gloomy thought. Lionel felt that he had touched a wrong chord, and glanced timidly toward Fairthorn, but that gentleman cautiously held up his finger, and then rapidly put it to his lip, and as rapidly drew it away. After that signal the boy did not dare to break the silence, which now lasted uninterruptedly till Darrell rose, and with the formal and superfluous question, "Any more wine?" led the way back to the library. There he ensconced himself in an easy chair, and saying, "Will you find a book for yourself, Lionel?" took a volume at random from the nearest shelf, and soon seemed absorbed in its contents. The room, made irregular by bay-windows, and shelves that projected as in public libraries, abounded with nook and recess. To one of these Fairthorn sidled himself, and became invisible. Lionel looked round the shelves. No *belles lettres* of our immediate generation were found there—none of those authors most in request at circulating libraries and literary institutes. The shelves could discover none more recent than the Johnsonian age. Neither in the lawyer's library were to be found any law-books—no, nor the pamphlets and parliamentary volumes that should have spoken of the once eager politician. But there were superb copies of the ancient classics. French and Italian authors were not wanting, nor such of the English as have withstood the test of time. The larger portion of the shelves seemed, however, devoted to philosophical works. Here alone was novelty admitted—the newest essays on science, or the best editions of old works thereon. Lionel at length made his choice—a volume of the "Faerie Queen." Coffee was served; at a later hour, tea. The clock struck ten. Darrell laid down his book.

"Mr. Fairthorn—the Flute!"

From the recess a mutter, and presently—the musician remaining still hidden—there came forth the sweetest note—so dulcet, so plaintive! Lionel's ear was ravished. The music suited well with the enchanted page through which his fancy had been wandering dream-like—the flute with the "Faerie Queen." As the air flowed liquid on Lionel's eyes filled with tears. He did not observe that Darrell was intently watching him. When the music stopped he turned aside to wipe the tears from his eyes. Somehow or other, what with the poem, what with the flute, his thoughts had wandered far, far hence to the green banks and blue waves of the Thames—to Sophy's charming face, to her parting childish

gift! And where was she now? Whither passing away, after so brief a holiday, into the shadows of forlorn life?

Darrell's bell-like voice smote his ear.

"Spenser! You love him! Do you write poetry?"

"No, Sir, I only feel it!"

"Do neither!" said the host, abruptly. Then turning away, he lighted his candle, murmured a quick good-night, and disappeared through a side-door which led to his own rooms.

Lionel looked round for Fairthorn, who now emerged *ab angulo*—from his nook.

"Oh, Mr. Fairthorn, how you have enchanted me! I never believed the flute could have been capable of such effects!"

Mr. Fairthorn's grotesque face lighted up. He took off his spectacles, as if the better to contemplate the face of his eulogist. "So you were pleased! really?" he said, chuckling a strange, grim chuckle, deep in his inmost self.

"Pleased! it is a cold word! Who would not be more than pleased?"

"You should hear me in the open air."

"Let me do so—to-morrow."

"My dear young Sir, with all my heart. Hist!" gazing round as if haunted—"I like you. I wish *him* to like you. Answer all his questions as if you did not care how he turned you inside out. Never ask him a question, as if you sought to know what he did not himself confide. So there is something, you think, in a flute, after all? There are people who prefer the fiddle."

"Then they never heard your flute, Mr. Fairthorn." The musician again emitted his discordant chuckle, and, nodding his head nervously and cordially, shambled away without lighting a candle, and was ingulfed in the shadows of some mysterious corner.

CHAPTER IV.

The Old World, and the New.

It was long before Lionel could sleep. What with the strange house, and the strange master—what with the magic flute, and the musician's admonitory caution—what with tender and regretful reminiscences of Sophy, his brain had enough to work on. When he slept at last, his slumber was deep and heavy, and he did not wake till gently shaken by the well-bred arm of Mr. Mills. "I humbly beg pardon—nine o'clock, Sir, and the breakfast-bell going to ring." Lionel's toilet was soon hurried over; Mr. Darrell and Fairthorn were talking together as he entered the breakfast-room—the same room as that in which they had dined.

"Good-morning, Lionel," said the host. "No leave-taking to-day, as you threatened. I find you have made an appointment with Mr. Fairthorn, and I shall place you under his care. You may like to look over the old house, and make yourself"—Darrell paused—"At home," jerked out Mr. Fairthorn, filling up the *hiatus*. Darrell turned his eye toward the speaker, who evidently became much frightened, and, after looking in vain for a corner, sidled away to the window, and poked himself behind the curtain. "Mr. Fairthorn, in the capacity of my secretary, has learned to find me thoughts, and put them in his own words," said Darrell, with a coldness almost icy. He then seated himself at the breakfast-table; Lionel followed his example, and Mr. Fairthorn, courageously emerging, also took a chair and a roll. "You were a true diviner, Mr. Darrell," said Lionel; "it is a glorious day."

"But there will be showers later. The fish are at play on the surface of the lake," Darrell added, with a softened glance toward Fairthorn, who was looking the picture of misery. "After twelve, it will be just the weather for trout to rise; and if you fish, Mr. Fairthorn will lend you a rod. He is a worthy successor of Izaak Walton, and loves a companion as Izaak did, but more rarely gets one."

"Are there trout in your lake, Sir?"

"The lake! You must not dream of invading that sacred water. The inhabitants of rivulets and brooks not within my boundary are beyond the pale of Fawley civilization, to be snared and slaughtered like Caffres, red men, or any other savages, for whom we bait with a missionary, and whom we impale on a bayonet. But I regard my lake as a political community, under the protection of the law, and leave its denizens to devour each other, as Europeans, fishes and other cold-blooded creatures wisely do, in order to check the overgrowth of population. To fatten one pike it takes a great many minnows. Naturally I support the vested rights of pike. I have been a lawyer."

It would be in vain to describe the manner in which Mr. Darrell vented this or similar remarks of mocking irony, or sarcastic spleen. It was not bitter nor sneering, but in his usual mellifluous level tone and passionless tranquillity.

The breakfast was just over as a groom passed in front of the windows with a led horse. "I am going to leave you, Lionel," said the host, "to make—friends with Mr. Fairthorn, and I thus complete the sentence which he diverted astray, according to my own original intention." He passed across the hall to the open house-door, and stood by the horse stroking its neck and giving some directions to the groom. Lionel and Fairthorn followed to the threshold, and the beauty of the horse provoked the boy's admiration: it was a dark muzzled brown, of that fine old-fashioned breed of English roadster which is now so seldom seen; showy, bow-necked, long-tailed, stumbling reedy hybrids, born of bad barbs, ill-mated, having mainly supplied their place. This was, indeed, a horse of great power, immense girth of loin, high shoulder, broad hoof; and such a head! the ear, the frontal, the nostril! you seldom see a human physiognomy half so intelligent, half so expressive of that high spirit and sweet generous temper, which, when united, constitute the ideal of thorough-breeding, whether in horse or man. The English rider was in harmony with the English steed. Darrell at this moment was resting his arm lightly on the animal's shoulder, and his head still uncovered. It has been said before that he was of imposing presence; the striking attribute of his person, indeed, was that of unconscious grandeur; yet, though above the ordinary height, he was not very tall—five feet eleven at the utmost—and far from being very erect. On the contrary, there was that

habitual bend in his proud neck which men who meditate much and live alone almost invariably contract. But there was, to use an expression common with our older writers, that "great air" about him which filled the eye, and gave him the dignity of elevated stature, the commanding aspect that accompanies the upright carriage. His figure was inclined to be slender; though broad of shoulder and deep of chest; it was the figure of a young man, and probably little changed from what it might have been at five-and-twenty. A certain youthfulness still lingered even on the countenance—strange, for sorrow is supposed to expedite the work of age; and Darrell had known sorrow of a kind most adapted to harrow his peculiar nature, as great in its degree as ever left man's heart in ruins. No gray was visible in the dark brown hair, that, worn short behind, still retained in front the large Jovelike curl. No wrinkle, save at the corner of the eyes, marred the pale bronze of the firm cheek; the forehead was smooth as marble, and as massive. It was that forehead which chiefly contributed to the superb expression of his whole aspect. It was high to a fault; the perceptive organs, over a dark, strongly-marked, arched eyebrow, powerfully developed, as they are with most eminent lawyers: it did not want for breadth at the temples; yet on the whole, it bespoke more of intellectual vigor and dauntless will than of serene philosophy or all-embracing benevolence. It was the forehead of a man formed to command and awe the passions and intellect of others by the strength of passions in himself, rather concentred than chastised, and an intellect forceful from the weight of its mass rather than the niceness of its balance. The other features harmonized with that brow; they were of the noblest order of aquiline, at once high and delicate. The lip had a rare combination of exquisite refinement and inflexible resolve. The eye, in repose, was cold, bright, unrevealing, with a certain absent, musing, self-absorbed expression, that often made the man's words appear as if spoken mechanically, and assisted toward that seeming of listless indifference to those whom he addressed, by which he wounded vanity, without, perhaps, any malice prepense. But it was an eye in which the pupil could suddenly expand, the hue change from gray to dark, and the cold still brightness flash into vivid fire. It could not have occurred to any one, even to the most commonplace woman, to have described Darrell's as a handsome face; the expression would have seemed trivial and derogatory; the words that would have occurred to all, would have been somewhat to this effect—"What a magnificent countenance! What a noble head!" Yet an experienced physiognomist might have noted that the same lineaments which bespoke a virtue bespoke also its neighboring vice; that with so much will there went stubborn obstinacy; that with that power of grasp there would be the tenacity in adherence which narrows in astringing the intellect; that a prejudice once conceived, a passion once cherished, would resist all rational argument for relinquishment. When men of this mould do relinquish prejudice or passion, it is by their own impulse, their own sure conviction that what they hold is worthless: then they do not yield it graciously; they fling it from them in scorn, but not a scorn that consoles. That which they thus wrench away had grown a living part of themselves; their own flesh bleeds—the wound seldom or never heals. Such men rarely fail in the achievement of what they covet, if the gods are neutral; but adamant against the world, they are vulnerable through their affections. Their love is intense, but undemonstrative; their hatred implacable, but unrevengeful. Too proud to revenge, too galled to pardon.

There stood Guy Darrell, to whom the bar had destined its highest honors, to whom the Senate had accorded its most rapturous cheers; and the more you gazed on him as he there stood, the more perplexed became the enigma, how with a career sought with such energy, advanced with such success, the man had abruptly subsided into a listless recluse, and the career had been voluntarily resigned for a home without neighbors, a hearth without children.

"I had no idea," said Lionel, as Darrell rode slowly away, soon lost from sight amidst the thick foliage of summer trees—"I had no idea that my cousin was so young!"

"Oh, yes!" said Mr. Fairthorn; "he is only a year older than I am!"

"Older than you!" exclaimed Lionel, staring in blunt amaze at the elderly-looking personage beside him; "yet true—he told me so himself."

"And I am fifty-one last birthday."

"Mr. Darrell fifty-two! Incredible!"

"I don't know why we should ever grow old, the life we lead," observed Mr. Fairthorn, readjusting his spectacles. "Time stands so still! Fishing, too, is very conducive to longevity. If you will follow me we will get the rods; and the flute—you are quite sure you would like the flute? Yes! thank you, my dear young Sir. And yet there are folks who prefer the fiddle!"

"Is not the sun a little too bright for the fly at present? and will you not, in the mean while, show me over the house?"

"Very well; not that this house has much worth seeing. The other, indeed, would have had a music-room! But, after all, nothing like the open air for the flute. This way."

I spare thee, gentle reader, the minute inventory of Fawley Manor House. It had nothing but its antiquity to recommend it. It had a great many rooms, all, except those used as the dining-room and library, very small and very low—innumerable closets, nooks—unexpected cavities, as if made on purpose for the venerable game of hide-and-seek. Save a stately old kitchen, the offices were sadly defective, even for Mr. Darrell's domestic establishment, which consisted but of two men and four maids (the stablemen not lodging in the house). Drawing-room, properly speaking, it had none. At some remote period a sort of gallery under the gable roofs (above the first floor), stretching from end to end of the house, might have served for the reception of guests on grand occasions. For fragments of mouldering tapestry still, here and there, clung to the walls; and a high chimney-piece, whereon, in plaster relief, was commemorated the memorable fishing-party of Antony and Cleopatra, retained patches of color and gilding, which must, when fresh, have made the Egyptian queen still more appallingly hideous, and the fish at the end of Antony's hook

still less resembling any creature known to ichthyologists.

The library had been arranged into shelves from floor to roof by Mr. Darrell's father, and subsequently, for the mere purpose of holding as many volumes as possible, brought out into projecting wings (college-like) by Darrell himself, without any pretension to mediæval character. With this room communicated a small reading-closet, which the host reserved to himself; and this, by a circular stair cut into the massive wall, ascended first into Mr. Darrell's sleeping-chamber, and thence into a gable recess that adjoined the gallery, and which the host had fitted up for the purpose of scientific experiments in chemistry, or other branches of practical philosophy. These more private rooms Lionel was not permitted to enter.

Altogether the house was one of those cruel tenements which it would be a sin to pull down or even materially to alter, but which it would be an hourly inconvenience for a modern family to inhabit. It was out of all character with Mr. Darrell's former position in life, or with the fortune which Lionel vaguely supposed him to possess, and considerably underrated. Like Sir Nicholas Bacon, the man had grown too large for his habitation.

"I don't wonder," said Lionel, as, their wanderings over, he and Fairthorn found themselves in the library, "that Mr. Darrell began to build a new house. But it would have been a great pity to pull down this for it."

"Pull down this! Don't hint at such an idea to Mr. Darrell. He would as soon have pulled down the British monarchy! Nay, I suspect, sooner."

"But the new building must surely have swallowed up the old one."

"Oh, no; Mr. Darrell had a plan by which he would have inclosed this separately in a kind of court with an open screen work or cloister; and it was his intention to appropriate it entirely to mediæval antiquities, of which he had a wonderful collection. He had a notion of illustrating every earlier reign in which his ancestors flourished—different apartments in correspondence with different dates. It would have been a chronicle of national manners."

"But, if it be not an impertinent question, where is this collection? In London?"

"Hush! hush! I will give you a peep of some of the treasures, only don't betray me."

Fairthorn here, with singular rapidity, considering that he never moved in a straightforward direction, undulated into the open air in front of the house, described a rhomboid toward a side-buttress in the new building, near to which was a postern door; unlocked that door from a key in his pocket, and, motioning Lionel to follow him, entered within the ribs of the stony skeleton. Lionel followed in a sort of supernatural awe, and beheld, with more substantial alarm, Mr. Fairthorn winding up an inclined plank which he embraced with both arms, and by which he ultimately ascended to a timber joist in what should have been an upper floor, only flooring there was none. Perched there, Fairthorn glared down on Lionel through his spectacles. "Dangerous," he said, whisperingly; "but one gets used to every thing! If *you* feel afraid, don't venture!"

Lionel, animated by that doubt of his courage, sprang up the plank, balancing himself, school-boy fashion, with outstretched arms, and gained the side of his guide.

"Don't touch me," exclaimed Mr. Fairthorn, shrinking, "or we shall both be over. Now observe and imitate." Dropping himself then carefully and gradually, till he dropped on the timber joist as if it were a velocipede, his long legs dangling down, he with thigh and hand impelled himself onward till he gained the ridge of a wall, on which he delivered his person, and wiped his spectacles.

Lionel was not long before he stood in the same place. "Here we are!" said Fairthorn.

"I don't see the collection," answered Lionel, first peering down athwart the joists upon the rugged ground overspread with stones and rubbish, then glancing up, through similar interstices above, to the gaunt rafters.

"Here are some—most precious," answered Fairthorn, tapping behind him. "Walled up, except where these boards, cased in iron, are nailed across, with a little door just big enough to creep through; but that is locked—Chubb's lock, and Mr. Darrell keeps the key!—treasures for a palace! No, you can't peep through here—not a chink; but come on a little further,—mind your footing."

Skirting the wall, and still on the perilous ridge, Fairthorn crept on, formed an angle, and, stopping short, clapped his eye to the crevice of some planks nailed rudely across a yawning aperture. Lionel found another crevice for himself, and saw, piled up in admired disorder, pictures, with their backs turned to a desolate wall, rare cabinets, and articles of curious furniture, chests, boxes, crates—heaped pell-mell. This receptacle had been roughly floored in deal, in order to support its miscellaneous contents, and was lighted from a large window (not visible in front of the house), glazed in dull rough glass, with ventilators.

"These are the heavy things, and least costly things, that no one could well rob. The pictures here are merely curious as early specimens, intended for the old house, all spoiling and rotting; Mr. Darrell wishes them to do so, I believe! What he wishes must be done! my dear young Sir—a prodigious mind—it is of granite."

"I can not understand it," said Lionel, aghast. "The last man I should have thought capriciously whimsical."

"Whimsical! Bless my soul! don't say such a word—don't, pray, or the roof will fall down upon us! Come away. You have seen all you can see. You must go first now—mind that loose stone there!"

Nothing further was said till they were out of the building; and Lionel felt like a knight of old who had been led into sepulchral halls by a wizard.

CHAPTER V.

The annals of empire are briefly chronicled in family records brought down to the present day, showing that the race of men is indeed "like leaves on trees, now green in youth, now withering on the ground." Yet to the branch the most bare will green leaves return, so long as the sap can remount to the branch from the root; but the branch which has ceased to take life from

the root—hang it high, hang it low—is a prey to the wind and the woodman.

It was mid-day. The boy and his new friend were standing apart, as becomes silent anglers, on the banks of a narrow brawling rivulet, running through green pastures, half a mile from the house. The sky was overcast, as Darrell had predicted, but the rain did not yet fall. The two anglers were not long before they had filled a basket with small trout.

Then Lionel, who was by no means fond of fishing, laid his rod on the bank, and strolled across the long grass to his companion.

"It will rain soon," said he. "Let me take advantage of the present time, and hear the flute, while we can yet enjoy the open air. No, not by the margin, or you will be always looking after the trout. On the rising-ground, see that old thorn-tree—let us go and sit under it. The new building looks well from it. What a pile it would have been! I may not ask you, I suppose, why it is left incompleted. Perhaps it would have cost too much, or would have been disproportionate to the estate."

"To the present estate it would have been disproportioned, but not to the estate Mr. Darrell intended to add to it. As to cost, you don't know him. He would never have undertaken what he could not afford to complete; and what he once undertook, no thoughts of the cost would have scared him from finishing. Prodigious mind—granite! And so rich!" added Fairthorn, with an air of great pride. "I ought to know; I write all his letters on money matters. How much do you think he has, without counting land?"

"I can not guess."

"Nearly half a million—in two years it will be more than half a million. And he had not three hundred a year when he began life; for Fawley was sadly mortgaged."

"Is it possible! Could any lawyer make half a million at the bar?"

"If any man could, he would, if he set his mind on it. But it was not all made at the bar, though a great part of it was. An East Indian old bachelor of the same name, but who had never been heard of hereabouts till he wrote from Calcutta to Mr. Darrell (inquiring if they were any relations—and Mr. Darrell referred him to the College-at-Arms, which proved that they came from the same stock ages ago)—left him all his money. Mr. Darrell was not dependent on his profession when he stood up in Parliament. And since we have been here, such savings! Not that Mr. Darrell is avaricious, but how can he spend money in this place? You should have seen the servants we kept in Carlton Gardens. Such a cook too—a French gentleman—looked like a marquis. Those were happy days, and proud ones! It is true that I order the dinner here, but it can't be the same thing. Do you like fillet of veal? we have one to-day."

"We used to have a fillet of veal at school on Sundays. I thought it good then."

"It makes a nice mince," said Mr. Fairthorn, with a sensual movement of his lips. "One must think of dinner when one lives in the country—so little else to think of! Not that Mr. Darrell does, but then *he* is—granite!"

"Still," said Lionel, smiling, "I do not get my answer. Why was the house uncompleted? and why did Mr. Darrell retire from public life?"

"He took both into his head; and when a thing once gets there, it is no use asking why. But," added Fairthorn, and his innocent ugly face changed into an expression of earnest sadness—"but no doubt he had his reasons. He has reasons for all he does, only they lie far far away from what appears on the surface—far as that rivulet lies from its source! My dear young Sir, Mr. Darrell has known griefs on which it does not become you and me to talk. He never talks of them. The least I can do for my benefactor is not to pry into his secrets, nor babble them out. And he is so kind—so good—never gets into a passion; but it is so awful to wound him—it gives him such pain; that's why he frightens me—frightens me horribly; and so he will you when you come to know him. Prodigious mind!—granite—overgrown with sensitive plants. Yes, a little music will do us both good."

Mr. Fairthorn screwed his flute—an exceedingly handsome one. He pointed out its beauties to Lionel—a present from Mr. Darrell last Christmas—and then he began. Strange thing, Art! especially music. Out of an art a man may be so trivial you would mistake him for an imbecile—at best, a grown infant. Put him into his art, and how high he soars above you! How quietly he enters into a heaven of which he has become a denizen, and, unlocking the gates with his golden key, admits you to follow, an humble, reverent visitor.

In his art Fairthorn was certainly a master, and the air he now played was exquisitely soft and plaintive; it accorded with the clouded yet quiet sky, with the lone but summer landscape, with Lionel's melancholic but not afflicted train of thought. The boy could only murmur, "Beautiful!" when the musician ceased.

"It is an old air," said Fairthorn; "I don't think it is known. I found its scale scrawled down in a copy of the Eikon Basilike, with the name of *Joannes Darrell, Eq. Aurat*, written under it. That, by the date, was Sir John Darrell, the cavalier who fought for Charles I., father of the graceless Sir Ralph, who flourished under Charles II. Both their portraits are in the dining-room.

"Tell me something of the family; I know so little about it—not even how the Haughtons and Darrells seem to have been so long connected. I see by the portraits that the Haughton name was borne by former Darrells, then apparently dropped, now it is borne again by my cousin."

"He bears it only as a Christian name. Your grandfather was his sponsor. But he is, nevertheless, the head of your family."

"So he says. How?"

Fairthorn gathered himself up, his knees to his chin, and began in the tone of a guide who has got his lesson by heart, though it was not long before he warmed into his subject.

"The Darrells are supposed to have got their name from a knight in the reign of Edward III., who held the lists in a joust victoriously against all comers, and was called, or called himself, John the Dare-all; or, in old spelling, the Der-all! They were among the most powerful fam-

ilies in the country; their alliances were with the highest houses—Montfichets, Nevilles, Mowbrays; they descend through such marriages from the blood of Plantagenet kings. You'll find their names in Chronicles in the early French wars. Unluckily, they attached themselves to the fortunes of Earl Warwick, the King-maker, to whose blood they were allied; their representative was killed in the fatal field of Barnet; their estates were, of course, confiscated; the sole son and heir of that ill-fated politician passed into the Low Countries, where he served as a soldier. His son and grandson followed the same calling under foreign banners. But they must have kept up the love of the old land; for, in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the last male Darrell returned to England with some broad gold pieces, saved by himself or his exiled fathers, bought some land in this county, in which the ancestral possessions had once been large, and built the present house, of a size suited to the altered fortunes of a race that had, in a former age, manned castles with retainers. The baptismal name of the soldier who thus partially refounded the old line in England was that now borne by your cousin Guy—a name always favored by Fortune in the family annals; for, in Elizabeth's time, from the rank of small gentry, to which their fortune alone lifted them since their return to their native land, the Darrells rose once more into wealth and eminence under a handsome young Sir Guy—we have his picture in black flowered velvet—who married the heiress of the Haughtons, a family that had grown rich under the Tudors, and in high favor with the Maiden-Queen. This Sir Guy was befriended by Essex, and knighted by Elizabeth herself. Their old house was then abandoned for the larger mansion of the Haughtons, which had also the advantage of being nearer to the Court. The renewed prosperity of the Darrells was of short duration. The Civil Wars came on, and Sir John Darrell took the losing side. He escaped to France with his only son. He is said to have been an accomplished, melancholy man; and my belief is, that he composed that air which you justly admire for its mournful sweetness. He turned Roman Catholic, and died in a convent. But the son, Ralph, was brought up in France with Charles II. and other gay roisterers. On the return of the Stuart, Ralph ran off with the daughter of the Roundhead to whom his estates had been given, and, after getting them back, left his wife in the country, and made love to other men's wives in town. Shocking profligate! no fruit could thrive upon such a branch. He squandered all he could squander, and would have left his children beggars, but that he was providentially slain in a tavern brawl for boasting of a lady's favors to her husband's face. The husband suddenly stabbed him—no fair duello, for Sir Ralph was invincible with the small sword. Still the family fortune was much dilapidated, yet still the Darrells lived in the fine house of the Haughtons, and left Fawley to the owls. But Sir Ralph's son, in his old age, married a second time, a young lady of high rank, an earl's daughter. He must have been very much in love with her, despite his age; for, to win her consent or her father's, he agreed to settle all the Haughton estates on her and the children she might bear to him. The smaller Darrell property had already been entailed on his son by his first marriage. This is how the family came to split. Old Darrell had children by his second wife; the eldest of those children took the Haughton name, and inherited the Haughton property. The son by the first marriage had nothing but Fawley, and the scanty domain round it. You descend from the second marriage, Mr. Darrell from the first. You understand now, my dear young Sir?"

"Yes, a little; but I should like very much to know where those fine Haughton estates are now?"

"Where they are now? I can't say. They were once in Middlesex. Probably much of the land, as it was sold piecemeal, fell into small allotments, constantly changing hands. But the last relics of the property were, I know, bought on speculation by Cox the distiller; for, when we were in London, by Mr. Darrell's desire I went to look after them, and inquire if they could be repurchased. And I found that so rapid in a few years has been the prosperity of this great commercial country, that if one did buy them back, one would buy twelve villas, several streets, two squares, and a paragon! But as that symptom of national advancement, though a proud thought in itself, may not have any pleasing interest for you, I return to the Darrells. From the time in which the Haughton estate had parted from them, they settled back in their old house of Fawley. But they could never again hold up their heads with the noblemen and great squires in the county. As much as they could do to live at all upon the little patrimony; still the reminiscence of what they had been made them maintain it jealously, and entail it rigidly. The eldest son would never have thought of any profession or business; the younger sons generally became soldiers, and being always a venturesome race, and having nothing particular to make them value their existence, were no less generally killed off betimes. The family became thoroughly obscure, slipped out of place in the county, seldom rose to be even justices of the peace, never contrived to marry heiresses again, but only the daughters of some neighboring parson or squire as poor as themselves, but always of gentle blood. Oh, they were as proud as Spaniards in that respect. So from father to son, each generation grew obscurer and poorer; for, entail the estate as they might, still some settlements on it were necessary, and no settlements were ever brought into it; and thus entails were cut off to admit some new mortgage, till the rent-roll was somewhat less than £300 a year when Mr. Darrell's father came into possession. Yet somehow or other he got to college, where no Darrell had been since the time of the Glorious Revolution, and was a learned man and an antiquary—A GREAT ANTIQUARY! You may have read his works. I know there is one copy of them in the British Museum, and there is another here, but that copy Mr. Darrell keeps under lock and key."

"I am ashamed to say I don't even know the titles of those works."

"There were 'Popular Ballads on the Wars of the Roses;' 'Darrelliana,' consisting of traditional and other memorials of the Darrell

family; 'Inquiry into the Origin of Legends connected with Dragons;' 'Hours among Monumental Brasses,' and other ingenious lucubrations above the taste of the vulgar; some of them were even read at the Royal Society of Antiquaries. They cost much to print and publish. But I have heard my father, who was his bailiff, say that he was a pleasant man, and was fond of reciting old scraps of poetry, which he did with great energy; indeed, Mr. Darrell declares that it was the noticing, in his father's animated and felicitous elocution, the effects that voice, look, and delivery can give to words, which made Mr. Darrell himself the fine speaker that he is. But I can only recollect the Antiquary as a very majestic gentleman, with a long pigtail—awful, rather, not so much so as his son, but still awful—and so sad-looking; you would not have recovered your spirits for a week if you had seen him, especially when the old house wanted repairs, and he was thinking how he could pay for them!"

"Was Mr. Darrell, the present one, an only child?"

"Yes, and much with his father, whom he loved most dearly, and to this day he sighs if he has to mention his father's name! He has old Mr. Darrell's portrait over the chimney-piece in his own reading-room; and he had it in his own library in Carlton Gardens. Our Mr. Darrell's mother was very pretty, even as I remember her; she died when he was about ten years old. And she too was a relation of yours—a Haughton by blood; but perhaps you will be ashamed of her, when I say she was a governess in a rich mercantile family. She had been left an orphan. I believe old Mr. Darrell (not that he was old then) married her because the Haughtons could or would do nothing for her, and because she was much snubbed and put upon, as I am told governesses usually are—married her because, poor as he was, he was still the head of both families, and bound to do what he could for decayed scions! The first governess a Darrell ever married, but no true Darrell would have called *that* a *mesalliance*, since she was still a Haughton, and 'Fors non mutat genus,' Chance does not change race."

"But how comes it that the Haughtons—my grandfather Haughton, I suppose, would do nothing for his own kinswoman?"

"It was not your grandfather, Robert Haughton, who was a generous man—he was then a mere youngster, hiding himself for debt—but your great-grandfather, who was a hard man, and on the turf. He never had money to give—only money for betting. He left the Haughton estates sadly dipped. But when Robert succeeded, he came forward, was godfather to our Mr. Darrell, insisted on sharing the expense of sending him to Eton, where he became greatly distinguished; thence to Oxford, where he increased his reputation; and would probably have done more for him, only Mr. Darrell, once his foot on the ladder, wanted no help to climb to the top."

"Then my grandfather, Robert, still had the Haughton estates? Their last relics had not been yet transmuted by Mr. Cox into squares and a paragon?"

"No; the grand old mansion, though much dilapidated, with its park, though stripped of salable timber, was still left, with a rental from farms that still appertained to the residence, which would have sufficed a prudent man for the luxuries of life, and allowed a reserve fund to clear off the mortgages gradually. Abstinence and self-denial for one or two generations would have made a property, daily rising in value as the metropolis advanced to its outskirts, a princely estate for a third. But Robert Haughton, though not on the turf, had a grand way of living; and while Guy Darrell went into the law to make a small patrimony a large fortune, your father, my dear young Sir, was put into the Guards to reduce a large patrimony—into Mr. Cox's distillery."

Lionel colored, but remained silent.

Fairthorn, who was as unconscious, in his zest of narrator, that he was giving pain as an entomologist, in his zest for collecting, when he pins a live moth into his cabinet, resumed: "Your father and Guy Darrell were warm friends as boys and youths. Guy was the elder of the two, and Charlie Haughton (I beg your pardon, he was always called Charlie) looked up to him as to an elder brother. Many's the scrape Guy got him out of; and many a pound, I believe, when Guy had some funds of his own, did Guy lend to Charlie."

"I am very sorry to hear that," said Lionel, sharply.

Fairthorn looked frightened. "I'm afraid I have made a blunder. Don't tell Mr. Darrell."

"Certainly not; I promise. But how came my father to need this aid, and how came they at last to quarrel?"

"Your father, Charlie, became a gay young man about town, and very much the fashion. He was like you in person, only his forehead was lower and his eye not so steady. Mr. Darrell studied the law in Chambers. When Robert Haughton died, what with his debts, what with his father's, and what with Charlie's post-obits and I O U's, there seemed small chance indeed of saving the estate to the Haughtons. But then Mr. Darrell looked close into matters, and with such skill did he settle them that he removed the fear of foreclosure; and what with increasing the rental here and there, and replacing old mortgages by new at less interest, he contrived to extract from the property an income of nine hundred pounds a year to Charlie (three times the income Darrell had inherited himself), where before it had seemed that the debts were more than the assets. Foreseeing how much the land would rise in value, he then earnestly implored Charlie (who unluckily had the estate in fee-simple, as Mr. Darrell has this, to sell if he pleased), to live on his income, and in a few years a part of the property might be sold for building purposes, on terms that would save all the rest, with the old house in which Darrells and Haughtons both had once reared generations. Charlie promised, I know, and I've no doubt, my dear young Sir, quite sincerely—but all men are not granite! He took to gambling, incurred debts of honor, sold the farms one by one, resorted to usurers, and one night, after playing six hours at picquet, nothing was left for him but to sell all that remained to Mr. Cox the distiller, unknown to Mr. Darrell, who was then married himself, working hard, and living quite out of the news of the fashionable

world. Then Charlie Haughton sold out of the Guards, spent what he got for his commission, went into the line; and finally, in a country town, in which I don't think he was quartered, but having gone there on some sporting speculation, was unwillingly detained—married—"

"My mother!" said Lionel, haughtily; "and the best of women she is. What then?"

"Nothing, my dear young Sir—nothing, except that Mr. Darrell never forgave it. He has his prejudices; this marriage shocked one of them."

"Prejudice against my poor mother! I always supposed so! I wonder why? The most simple-hearted, inoffensive, affectionate woman."

"I have not a doubt of it; but it is beginning to rain. Let us go home. I should like some luncheon; it breaks the day."

"Tell me first why Mr. Darrell has a prejudice against my mother. I don't think that he has even seen her. Unaccountable caprice! Shocked him, too—what a word! Tell me—I beg—I insist."

"But you know," said Fairthorn, half piteously, half snappishly, "that Mrs. Haughton was the daughter of a linen-draper, and her father's money got Charlie out of the county jail; and Mr. Darrell said, 'Sold even your name!' My father heard him say it in the hall at Fawley. Mr. Darrell was there during a long vacation, and your father came to see him. Your father fired up, and they never saw each other, I believe, again."

Lionel remained still as if thunder-stricken. Something in his mother's language and manner had at times made him suspect that she was not so well born as his father. But it was not the discovery that she was a tradesman's daughter that galled him; it was the thought that his father was bought for the altar out of the county jail! It was those cutting words, "Sold even your name!" His face, before very crimson, became livid; his head sunk on his breast. He walked toward the old gloomy house by Fairthorn's side, as one who, for the first time in life, feels on his heart the leaden weight of an hereditary shame.

CHAPTER VI.

Showing how sinful it is in a man who does not care for his honor to beget children.

When Lionel saw Mr. Fairthorn devoting his intellectual being to the contents of a cold chicken-pie, he silently stepped out of the room, and slunk away into a thick copse at the farthest end of the paddock. He longed to be alone. The rain descended, not heavily, but in penetrating drizzle: he did not feel it, or rather, he felt glad that there was no gaudy, mocking sunlight. He sate down forlorn in the hollows of a glen which the copse covered, and buried his face in his clasped hands.

Lionel Haughton, as the reader may have noticed, was no premature man—a manly boy, but still a habitant of the twilight, dreamy shadow-land of boyhood. Noble elements were stirring fitfully within him, but their agencies were crude and undeveloped. Sometimes, through the native acuteness of his intellect, he apprehended truths quickly and truly as a man; then, again, through the warm haze of undisciplined tenderness, or the raw mists of that sensitive pride in which objects, small in themselves, loom large with undetected outlines, he fell back into the passionate dimness of a child's reasoning. He was intensely ambitious; Quixotic in the point of honor; dauntless in peril; but morbidly trembling at the very shadow of disgrace, as a foal, destined to be the war-horse and trample down leveled steel, starts in its tranquil pastures at the rustling of a leaf. Glowingly romantic, but not inclined to vent romance in literary creations, his feelings were the more high-wrought and enthusiastic because they had no outlet in poetic channels. Most boys of great ability and strong passion write verses—it is nature's relief to brain and heart at the critical turning-age. Most boys thus gifted do so; a few do not, and out of those few Fate selects the great men of action—those large, luminous characters that stamp poetry on the world's prosaic surface. Lionel had in him the pith and substance of Fortune's grand nobodies, who become Fame's abrupt somebodies when the chances of life throw suddenly in their way a noble something, to be ardently coveted and boldly won. But, I repeat, as yet he was a boy—so he sate there, his hands before his face, an unreasoning self-torturer. He knew now why this haughty Darrell had written with so little tenderness and respect to his beloved mother. Darrell looked on her as the cause of his ignoble kinsman's "sale of name;" nay, most probably ascribed to her, not the fond, girlish love which levels all disparities of rank, but the vulgar, cold-blooded design to exchange her father's bank-notes for a marriage beyond her station. And he was the debtor to this supercilious creditor, as his father had been before him! His father!—till then he had been so proud of that relationship. Mrs. Haughton had not been happy with her captain; his confirmed habits of wild dissipation had embittered her union, and at last worn away her wifely affections. But she had tended and nursed him, in his last illness, as the lover of her youth; and though occasionally she hinted at his faults, she ever spoke of him as the ornament of all society; poor, it is true, harassed by unfeeling creditors, but the finest of fine gentlemen. Lionel had never heard from her of the ancestral estates sold for a gambling debt; never from her of the county jail nor the mercenary *mesalliance*. In boyhood, before we have any cause to be proud of ourselves, we are so proud of our fathers, if we have a decent excuse for it. Of his father could Lionel Haughton be proud now? And Darrell was cognizant of his paternal disgrace, had taunted his father in yonder old hall—for what?—the marriage from which Lionel sprung? The hands grew tighter and tighter before that burning face. He did not weep, as he had done in Vance's presence at a thought much less galling. Not that tears would have misbecome him. Shallow judges of human nature are they who think that tears in themselves ever misbecome boy or even man. Well did the sternest of Roman writers place the arch distinction of humanity, aloft from all meaner of heaven's creatures, in the prerogative of tears!

Sooner mayest thou trust thy purse to a professional pickpocket than give loyal friendship to the man who boasts of eyes to which the heart never mounts in dew! Only, when man weeps he should be alone—not because tears are weak, but because they should be sacred. Tears are akin to prayers. Pharisees parade prayer; impostors parade tears. O Pegasus, Pegasus—softly, softly!—thou hast hurried me off amidst the clouds: drop me gently down—there, by the side of the motionless boy in the shadowy glen.

CHAPTER VII.

Lionel Haughton, having hitherto much improved his chance of fortune, decides the question, "What will he do with it?"

"I HAVE been seeking you every where," said a well-known voice; and a hand rested lightly on Lionel's shoulder. The boy looked up, startled, but yet heavily, and saw Guy Darrell, the last man on earth he could have desired to see. "Will you come in for a few minutes? you are wanted."

"What for? I would rather stay here. Who can want me?"

Darrell, struck by the words, and the sullen tone in which they were uttered, surveyed Lionel's face for an instant, and replied in a voice involuntarily more kind than usual—

"Some one very commonplace, but, since the Picts went out of fashion, very necessary to mortals the most sublime. I ought to apologize for his coming. You threatened to leave me yesterday because of a defect in your wardrobe. Mr. Fairthorn wrote to my tailor to hasten hither and repair it. He is here. I commend him to your custom! Don't despise him because he makes for a man of my remote generation. Tailors are keen observers, and do not grow out of date so quickly as politicians."

The words were said with a playful good-humor very uncommon to Mr. Darrell. The intention was obviously kind and kinsmanlike. Lionel sprang to his feet; his lip curled, his eye flashed, and his crest rose.

"No, Sir; I will not stoop to this! I will not be clothed by your charity—yours! I will not submit to an implied taunt upon my poor mother's ignorance of the manners of a rank to which she was not born! You said we might not like each other, and if so, we should part forever. I do not like you, and I will go!" He turned abruptly, and walked to the house—magnanimous. If Mr. Darrell had not been the most singular of men he might well have been offended. As it was, though none less accessible to surprise, he was surprised. But offended? Judge for yourself. "I declare," muttered Guy Darrell, gazing on the boy's receding figure—"I declare that I almost feel as if I could once again be capable of an emotion! I hope I am not going to like that boy! The old Darrell blood in his veins, surely. I might have spoken as he did at his age, but I must have had some better reason for it. What did I say to justify such an explosion! *Quid feci?—ubi lapsus?* Gone, no doubt, to pack up his knapsack, and take the Road to Ruin! Shall I let him go? Better for me, if I am really in danger of liking him; and so be at his mercy to sting—what? my heart? I defy him; it is dead. No; he shall not go thus. I am the head of our joint houses. Houses! I wish he *had* a house, poor boy! And his grandfather loved me. Let him go! I will beg his pardon first; and he may dine in his drawers if that will settle the matter!"

Thus, no less magnanimous than Lionel, did this misanthropical man follow his ungracious cousin. "Ha!" cried Darrell, suddenly, as, approaching the threshold, he saw Mr. Fairthorn at the dining-room window occupied in nibbing a pen upon an ivory thumb-stall—"I have hit it! That abominable Fairthorn has been shedding its prickles! How could I trust flesh and blood to such a bramble? I'll know what it was, this instant!" Vain Menace! No sooner did Mr. Fairthorn catch glimpse of Darrell's countenance within ten yards of the porch than, his conscience taking alarm, he rushed incontinent from the window—the apartment—and ere Darrell could fling open the door, was lost in some lair—"*nullis penetrabilis astris*"—in that sponge-like and cavernous abode, wherewith benignant Providence had suited the locality to the creature.

CHAPTER VIII.

New imbroglio in that ever-recurring, never-to-be-settled question, "What will he do with it?"

WITH a disappointed glare, and a baffled shrug of the shoulder, Mr. Darrell turned from the dining-room, and passed up the stairs to Lionel's chamber, opened the door quickly, and extending his hand, said, in that tone which had disarmed the wrath of ambitious factions, and even (if fame lie not) once seduced from the hostile Treasury-bench a placeman's vote, "I must have hurt your feelings, and I come to beg your pardon!"

But before this time Lionel's proud heart, in which ungrateful anger could not long find room, had smitten him for so ill a return to well-meant and not indelicate kindness. And, his wounded egotism appeased by its very outburst, he had called to mind Fairthorn's allusions to Darrell's secret griefs—griefs that must have been indeed stormy so to have revulsed the currents of a life. And, despite those griefs, the great man had spoken playfully to him—playfully in order to make light of obligations. So when Guy Darrell now extended that hand, and stooped to that apology, Lionel was fairly overcome. Tears, before refused, now found irresistible way. The hand he could not take, but, yielding to his yearning impulse, he threw his arms fairly round his host's neck, leaned his young cheek upon that granite breast, and sobbed out incoherent words of passionate repentance—honest, venerating affection. Darrell's face changed, looking for a moment wondrous soft—and then, as by an effort of supreme self-control, it became severely placid. He did not return that embrace, but certainly he in no way repelled it; nor did he trust himself to speak till the boy had exhausted the force of his first feelings, and had turned to dry his tears.

Then he said, with a soothing sweetness: "Lionel Haughton, you have the heart of a gen-

tleman that can never listen to a frank apology for unintentional wrong, but what it springs forth to take the blame to itself, and return apology ten-fold. Enough! A mistake, no doubt, on both sides. More time must elapse before either can truly say that he does not like the other. Meanwhile," added Darrell, with almost a laugh—and that concluding query showed that even on trifles the man was bent upon either forcing or stealing his own will upon others—"meanwhile, must I send away the tailor?"

I need not repeat Lionel's answer.

CHAPTER IX.

Darrell: mystery in his past life. What has he done with it?

Some days passed—each day varying little from the other. It was the habit of Darrell, if he went late to rest, to rise early. He never allowed himself more than five hours' sleep. A man greater than Guy Darrell—Sir Walter Raleigh—carved from the solid day no larger a slice for Morpheus. And it was this habit, perhaps, yet more than temperance in diet, which preserved to Darrell his remarkable youthfulness of aspect and frame, so that at fifty-two he looked, and really was, younger than many a strong man of thirty-five. For, certain it is, that on entering middle life, he who would keep his brain clear, his step elastic, his muscles from fleshiness, his nerves from tremor—in a word, retain his youth in spite of the register—should beware of long slumbers. Nothing ages like laziness. The hours before breakfast Darrell devoted first to exercise, whatever the weather—next to his calm scientific pursuits. At ten o'clock punctually he rode out alone, and seldom returned till late in the afternoon. Then he would stroll forth with Lionel into devious woodlands, or lounge with him along the margin of the lake, or lie down on the tedded grass, call the boy's attention to the insect populace which sports out its happy life in the summer months, and treat of the ways and habits of each varying species, with a quaint learning, half humorous, half grave. He was a minute observer and an accomplished naturalist. His range of knowledge was, indeed, amazingly large for a man who has had to pass his best years in a dry and absorbing study: necessarily not so profound in each section as that of a special professor, but if the science was often on the surface, the thoughts he deduced from what he knew were as often original and deep. A maxim of his, which he dropped out one day to Lionel in his careless manner, but pointed diction, may perhaps illustrate his own practice and its results: "Never think it enough to have solved the problem started by another mind, till you have deduced from it a corollary of your own."

After dinner, which was not over till past eight o'clock, they always adjourned to the library, Fairthorn vanishing into a recess, Darrell and Lionel each with his several book, then an air on the flute, and each to his own room before eleven. No life could be more methodical; yet to Lionel it had an animating charm, for his interest in his host daily increased, and varied his thoughts with perpetual occupation. Darrell, on the contrary, while more kind and cordial, more cautiously on his guard not to wound his young guest's susceptibilities than he had been before the quarrel and its reconciliation, did not seem to feel for Lionel the active interest which Lionel felt for him. He did not, as most clever men are apt to do in their intercourse with youth, attempt to draw him out, plumb his intellect, or guide his tastes. If he was at times instructive, it was because talk fell on subjects on which it pleased himself to touch, and in which he could not speak without involuntarily instructing. Nor did he ever allure the boy to talk of his school-days, of his friends, of his predilections, his hopes, his future. In short, had you observed them together, you would have never supposed they were connections—that one could and ought to influence and direct the career of the other. You would have said the host certainly liked the guest, as any man would like a promising, warm-hearted, high-spirited, graceful boy, under his own roof for a short time, but who felt that that boy was nothing to him—would soon pass from his eye—form friends, pursuits, aims—with which he could be in no way commingled, for which he should be wholly irresponsible. There was also this peculiarity in Darrell's conversation: if he never spoke of his guest's past and future, neither did he ever do more than advert in the most general terms to his own. Of that grand stage, on which he had been so brilliant an actor, he imparted no reminiscences; of those great men, the leaders of his age, with whom he had mingled familiarly, he told no anecdotes. Equally silent was he as to the earlier steps in his career, the modes by which he had studied, the accidents of which he had seized advantage—silent there as upon the causes he had gained, or the debates he had adorned. Never could you have supposed that this man, still in the prime of public life, had been the theme of journals, and the boast of party. Neither did he ever, as men who talk easily at their own hearths are prone to do, speak of projects in the future, even though the projects be no vaster than the planting of a tree or the alteration of a parterre—projects with which rural life so copiously and so innocently teems. The past seemed as if it had left to him no memory, the future as if it stored for him no desire. But did the past leave no memory? Why then at intervals would the book slide from his eye, the head sink upon the breast, and a shade of unutterable dejection darken over the grand beauty of that strong stern countenance? Still that dejection was not morbidly fed and encouraged, for he would fling it from him with a quick impatient gesture of the head, resume the book resolutely, or change it for another which induced fresh trains of thought, or look over Lionel's shoulder, and make some subtle comment on his choice, or call on Fairthorn for the flute; and in a few minutes the face was severely serene again. And be it here said, that it is only in the poetry of young gentlemen, or the prose of lady novelists, that a man in good health, and of sound intellect, wears the livery of unvarying gloom. However great his causes of sorrow, he does not forever parade its ostentatious mourning, nor follow the hearse of his

hopes with the long face of an undertaker. He will still have his gleams of cheerfulness—his moments of good-humor. The old smile will sometimes light the eye, and awake the old playfulness of the lip. But what a great and critical sorrow does leave behind is often far worse than the sorrow itself has been. It is a change in the inner man, which strands him, as Guy Darrell seemed stranded, upon the shoal of the Present; which, the more he strive manfully to bear his burden, warns him the more from dwelling on the Past; and the more impressively it enforce the lesson of the vanity of human wishes, strikes the more from his reckoning illusive hopes in the Future. Thus out of our threefold existence two parts are annihilated—the what has been—the what shall be. We fold our arms, stand upon the petty and steep cragstone, which alone looms out of the Measureless Sea, and say to ourselves, looking neither backward nor beyond, "Let us bear what is;" and so for the moment the eye can lighten and the lip can smile.

Lionel could no longer glean from Mr. Fairthorn any stray hints upon the family records. That gentleman had evidently been reprimanded for indiscretion, or warned against its repetition, and he became reserved and mum as if he had just emerged from the cave of Trophonius. Indeed he shunned trusting himself again alone to Lionel, and, affecting a long arrear of correspondence on behalf of his employer, left the lad during the forenoons to solitary angling, or social intercourse with the swans and the tame doe. But from some mystic concealment within doors would often float far into the open air the melodies of that magic flute; and the boy would glide back, along the dark-red mournful walls of the old house, or the futile pomp of pilastered arcades in the uncompleted new one, to listen to the sound: listening, *he*, blissful boy, forgot the present; *he* seized the unchallenged royalty of his years. For him no rebels in the past conspired with poison to the wine-cup, murder to the sleep. No deserts in the future, arresting the march of ambition, said, "Here are sands for a pilgrim, not fields for a conqueror."

CHAPTER X.

In which chapter the History quietly moves on to the next.

Thus nearly a week had gone, and Lionel began to feel perplexed as to the duration of his visit. Should he be the first to suggest departure? Mr. Darrell rescued him from that embarrassment. On the seventh day, Lionel met him in a lane near the house, returning from his habitual ride. The boy walked home by the side of the horseman, patting the steed, admiring its shape, and praising the beauty of another saddle-horse, smaller and slighter, which he had seen in the paddock exercised by a groom. "Do you ever ride that chestnut? I think it even handsomer than this."

"Half our preferences are due to the vanity they flatter. Few can ride this horse—any one, perhaps, that."

"There speaks the Dare-all!" said Lionel, laughing.

The host did not look displeased.

"Where no difficulty, there no pleasure," said he, in his curt laconic diction. "I was in Spain two years ago. I had not an English horse there, so I bought that Andalusian jennet. What has served him at need, no *preux chevalier* would leave to the chance of ill-usage. So the jennet came with me to England. You have not been much accustomed to ride, I suppose?"

"Not much; but my dear mother thought I ought to learn. She pinched for a whole year to have me taught at a riding-school during one school vacation."

"Your mother's relations are, I believe, well off. Do they suffer her to pinch?"

"I do not know that she has relations living; she never speaks of them."

"Indeed!" This was the first question on home matters that Darrell had ever directly addressed to Lionel. He there dropped the subject, and said, after a short pause, "I was not aware that you are a horseman, or I would have asked you to accompany me; will you do so to-morrow, and mount the jennet?"

"Oh, thank you; I should like it so much."

Darrell turned abruptly away from the bright grateful eyes. "I am only sorry," he added, looking aside, "that our excursions can be but few. On Friday next I shall submit to you a proposition; if you accept it, we shall part on Saturday—liking each other, I hope; speaking for myself, the experiment has not failed; and on yours?"

"On mine! oh, Mr. Darrell, if I dared but tell you what recollections of yourself the experiment will bequeath to me!"

"Do not tell me, if they imply a compliment," answered Darrell, with the low silvery laugh which so melodiously expressed indifference, and repelled affection. He entered the stable-yard, dismounted; and on returning to Lionel, the sound of the flute stole forth, as if from the eaves of the gabled roof. "Could the pipe of Horace's Faunus be sweeter than that flute?" said Darrell,

> "'*Utcunque dulci, Tyndare, fistula,*
> *Valles,*' etc.

What a lovely ode that is! What knowledge of town life! what susceptibility to the rural! Of all the Latins, Horace is the only one with whom I could wish to have spent a week. But no! I could not have discussed the brief span of human life with locks steeped in Malobathran balm, and wreathed with that silly myrtle. Horace and I would have quarreled over the first heady bowl of Massic. We never can quarrel now! Blessed subject and poet-laureate of Queen Proserpine, and, I dare swear, the most gentlemanlike poet she ever received at court, henceforth his task is to uncoil the asps from the brows of Alecto, and arrest the ambitious Orion from the chase after visionary lions."

CHAPTER XI.

Showing that if a good face is a letter of recommendation, a good heart is a letter of credit.

The next day they rode forth, host and guest, and that ride proved an eventful crisis in the fortune of Lionel Haughton. Hitherto I have

elaborately dwelt on the fact that, whatever the regard Darrell might feel for him, it was a regard apart from that interest which accepts a responsibility, and links to itself a fate. And even if, at moments, the powerful and wealthy man had felt that interest, he had thrust it from him. That he meant to be generous was indeed certain, and this he had typically shown in a very trite matter-of-fact way. The tailor, whose visit had led to such perturbation, had received instructions beyond the mere supply of the raiment for which he had been summoned; and a large patent portmanteau, containing all that might constitute the liberal outfit of a young man in the rank of a gentleman, had arrived at Fawley, and amazed and moved Lionel, whom Darrell had by this time thoroughly reconciled to the acceptance of benefits. The gift denoted this, "In recognizing you as kinsman, I shall henceforth provide for you as gentleman." Darrell indeed meditated applying for an appointment in one of the public offices, the settlement of a liberal allowance, and a parting shake of the hand, which should imply, "I have now behaved as becomes me; the rest belongs to you. We may never meet again. There is no reason why this good-by may not be forever."

But in the course of that ride Darrell's intentions changed. Wherefore? You will never guess! Nothing so remote as the distance between cause and effect, and the cause for the effect here was—poor little Sophy.

The day was fresh, with a lovely breeze, as the two riders rode briskly over the turf of rolling common-lands, with the feathery boughs of neighboring woodlands tossed joyously to and fro by the sportive summer wind. The exhilarating exercise and air raised Lionel's spirits, and released his tongue from all trammels; and when a boy is in high spirits, ten to one but he grows a frank egotist, feels the teeming life of his individuality, and talks about himself. Quite unconsciously Lionel rattled out gay anecdotes of his school-days; his quarrel with a demoniacal usher; how he ran away; what befell him; how the doctor went after, and brought him back; how splendidly the doctor behaved—neither flogged nor expelled him, but after patient listening, while he rebuked the pupil dismissed the usher, to the joy of the whole academy; how he fought the head boy in the school for calling the doctor a sneak; how, licked twice, he yet fought that head boy a third time, and licked him; how, when head boy himself, he had roused the whole school into a civil war, dividing the boys into Cavaliers and Roundheads; how clay was rolled out into cannon-balls and pistol-shot, sticks shaped into swords; the play-ground disturfed to construct fortifications; how a slovenly stout boy enacted Cromwell; how he himself was elevated into Prince Rupert; and how, reversing all history, and infamously degrading Cromwell, Rupert would not consent to be beaten; and Cromwell at the last, disabled by an untoward blow across the knuckles, ignominiously yielded himself prisoner, was tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be shot! To all this rubbish did Darrell incline his patient ear—not encouraging, not interrupting, but sometimes stifling a sigh at the sound of Lionel's merry laugh, or the sight of his fair face, with heightened glow on its cheeks, and his long silky hair, worthy the name of love-locks, blown by the wind from the open loyal features, which might well have graced the portrait of some youthful Cavalier. On bounded the Spanish jennet, on rattled the boy rider. He had left school now, in his headlong talk; he was describing his first friendship with Frank Vance, as a lodger at his mother's; how example fired him, and he took to sketch-work and painting; how kindly Vance gave him lessons; how at one time he wished to be a painter; how much the mere idea of such a thing vexed his mother, and how little she was moved when he told her that Titian was of a very ancient family, and that Francis I., archetype of gentlemen, visited Leonardo da Vinci's sick-bed; and that Henry VIII. had said to a pert lord who had snubbed Holbein, "I can make a lord any day, but I can not make a Holbein;" how Mrs. Haughton still confounded all painters in the general image of the painter and plumber who had cheated her so shamefully in the renewed window-sashes and redecorated walls, which Time and the four children of an Irish family had made necessary to the letting of the first floor. And these playful allusions to the maternal ideas were still not irreverent, but contrived so as rather to prepossess Darrell in Mrs. Haughton's favor, by bringing out traits of a simple natural mother, too proud, perhaps, of her only son, not caring what she did, how she worked, so that he might not lose caste as a born Haughton. Darrell understood, and nodded his head approvingly. "Certainly," he said, speaking almost for the first time, "fame confers a rank above that of gentlemen and of kings; and as soon as she issues her patent of nobility, it matters not a straw whether the recipient be the son of a Bourbon or of a tallow-chandler. But if Fame withhold her patent—if a well-born man paint aldermen, and be not famous (and I dare say you would have been neither a Titian nor a Holbein), why, he might as well be a painter and plumber, and has a better chance, even of bread and cheese, by standing to his post as gentleman. Mrs. Haughton was right, and I respect her."

"Quite right. If I lived to the age of Methuselah, I could not paint a head like Frank Vance."

"And even he is not famous yet. Never heard of him."

"He will be famous—I am sure of it; and if you lived in London, you would hear of him even now. Oh, Sir! such a portrait as he painted the other day! But I must tell you all about it." And therewith Lionel plunged at once, *medias res*, into the brief broken epic of little Sophy, and the eccentric infirm Belisarius for whose sake she first toiled and then begged; with what artless eloquence he brought out the colors of the whole story—now its humor, now its pathos; with what beautifying sympathy he adorned the image of the little vagrant girl, with her mien of gentlewoman and her simplicity of child; the river-excursion to Hampton Court; her still delight; how annoyed he felt when Vance seemed ashamed of her before those fine people; the orchard scene in which he had read Darrell's letter, that, for the time, drove her from the foremost place in his thoughts; the return home, the parting, her wistful look back, the visit to the Cobbler's next day—even her

farewell gift, the nursery poem, with the lines written on the fly-leaf, he had them by heart! Darrell, the grand advocate, felt he could not have produced on a jury, with those elements, the effect which that boy-narrator produced on his granite self.

"And, oh, Sir!" cried Lionel, checking his horse, and even arresting Darrell's with bold right hand, "oh!" said he, as he brought his moist and pleading eyes in full battery upon the shaken fort to which he had mined his way—"oh, Sir! you are so wise, and rich, and kind, do rescue that poor child from the penury and hardships of such a life! If you could but have seen and heard her! She could never have been born to it! You look away—I offend you. I have no right to tax your benevolence for others; but, instead of showering favors upon me, so little would suffice for her, if she were but above positive want, with that old man (she would not be happy without him), safe in such a cottage as you give to your own peasants! I am a man, or shall be one soon; I can wrestle with the world, and force my way somehow; but that delicate child, a village show, or a beggar on the high-road! no mother, no brother, no one but that broken-down cripple, leaning upon her arm as his crutch. I can not bear to think of it. I am sure I shall meet her again somewhere; and when I do, may I not write to you, and will you not come to her help? Do speak—do say 'Yes,' Mr. Darrell."

The rich man's breast heaved slightly; he closed his eyes, but for a moment. There was a short and sharp struggle with his better self, and the better self conquered.

"Let go my reins—see, my horse puts down his ears—he may do you a mischief. Now canter on—you shall be satisfied. Give me a moment to—to unbutton my coat—it is too tight for me."

CHAPTER XII.

Guy Darrel gives way to an impulse, and quickly decides what he will do with it.

"Lionel Haughton," said Guy Darrell, regaining his young cousin's side, and speaking in a firm and measured voice, "I have to thank you for one very happy minute; the sight of a heart so fresh in the limpid purity of goodness is a luxury you can not comprehend till you have come to my age; journeyed, like me, from Dan to Beersheba, and found all barren. Heed me; if you had been half a dozen years older, and this child for whom you plead had been a fair young woman, perhaps just as innocent, just as charming—more in peril—my benevolence would have lain as dormant as a stone. A young man's foolish sentiment for a pretty girl. As your true friend, I should have shrugged my shoulders, and said, 'Beware!' Had I been your father, I should have taken alarm, and frowned. I should have seen the sickly romance, which ends in dupes or deceivers. But at your age, you hearty, genial, and open-hearted boy—you caught but by the chivalrous compassion for helpless female childhood—oh, that you *were* my son—oh, that my dear father's blood were in those knightly veins! I had a son once! God took him;" the strong man's lips quivered—he hurried on. "I felt there was manhood in you when you wrote to fling my churlish favors in my teeth—when you would have left my roof-tree in a burst of passion which might be foolish, but was nobler than the wisdom of calculating submission — manhood, but only perhaps man's pride as man—man's heart not less cold than winter. To-day you have shown me something far better than pride; that nature which constitutes the heroic temperament is completed by two attributes—unflinching purpose, disinterested humanity. I know not yet if you have the first; you reveal to me the second. Yes! I accept the duties you propose to me; I will do more than leave to you the chance of discovering this poor child. I will direct my solicitor to take the right steps to do so. I will see that she is safe from the ills you fear for her. Lionel; more still, I am impatient till I write to Mrs. Haughton. I did her wrong. Remember, I have never seen her. I resented in her the cause of my quarrel with your father, who was once dear to me. Enough of that. I disliked the tone of her letters to me. I disliked it in the mother of a boy who had Darrell blood; other reasons too—let them pass. But in providing for your education, I certainly thought her relations provided for her support. She never asked me for help there; and, judging of her hastily, I thought she would not have scrupled to do so if my help there had not been forestalled. You have made me understand her better; and at all events, three-fourths of what we are in boyhood most of us owe to our mothers! You are frank, fearless, affectionate—a gentleman. I respect the mother who has such a son."

Certainly praise was rare upon Darrell's lips, but, when he did praise, he knew how to do it! And no man will ever command others who has not by nature that gift. It can not be learned. Art and experience can only refine its expression.

CHAPTER XIII.

He who sees his heir in his own child, carries his eye over hopes and possessions lying far beyond his gravestone; viewing his life, even here, as a period but closed with a comma. He who sees his heir in another man's child, sees the full stop at the end of the sentence.

Lionel's departure was indefinitely postponed; nothing more was said of it. Meanwhile Darrell's manner toward him underwent a marked change. The previous indifference the rich kinsman had hitherto shown as to the boy's past life, and the peculiarities of his intellect and character, wholly vanished. He sought now, on the contrary, to plumb thoroughly the more hidden depths which lurk in the nature of every human being, and which, in Lionel, were the more difficult to discern from the vivacity and candor which covered with so smooth and charming a surface a pride tremulously sensitive, and an ambition that startled himself in the hours when solitude and reverie reflect upon the visions of Youth the giant outline of its own hopes.

Darrell was not dissatisfied with the results of this survey; yet often, when perhaps most pleased, a shade would pass over his counte-

nance; and, had a woman who loved him been by to listen, she would have heard the short, slight sigh which came and went too quickly for the duller sense of man's friendship to recognize it as the sound of sorrow.

In Darrell himself, thus insensibly altered, Lionel daily discovered more to charm his interest and deepen his affection. In this man's nature there were, indeed, such wondrous under-currents of sweetness, so suddenly gushing forth, so suddenly vanishing again! And exquisite in him were the traits of that sympathetic tact which the world calls fine breeding, but which comes only from a heart at once chivalrous and tender, the more bewitching in Darrell from their contrast with a manner usually cold, and a bearing so stamped with masculine, self-willed, haughty power. Thus days went on as if Lionel had become a very child of the house. But his sojourn was in truth drawing near to a close not less abrupt and unexpected than the turn in his host's humors to which he owed the delay of his departure.

One bright afternoon, as Darrell was standing at the window of his private study, Fairthorn, who had crept in on some matter of business, looked at his countenance long and wistfully, and then, shambling up to his side, put one hand on his shoulder with a light, timid touch, and, pointing with the other to Lionel, who was lying on the grass in front of the casement, reading the *Faerie Queen*, said, "Why do you take him to your heart if he does not comfort it?"

Darrell winced, and answered gently, "I did not know you were in the room. Poor Fairthorn! thank you!"

"Thank me!—what for?"

"For a kind thought. So then you like the boy?"

"Mayn't I like him?" asked Fairthorn, looking rather frightened; "surely you do!"

"Yes, I *like* him much; I am trying my best to *love* him. But, but—" Darrell turned quickly, and the portrait of his father over the mantle-piece came full upon his sight—an impressive, a haunting face—sweet and gentle, yet with the high, narrow brow and arched nostril of pride, with restless, melancholy eyes, and an expression that revealed the delicacy of intellect, but not its power. There was something forlorn, yet imposing, in the whole effigy. As you continued to look at the countenance the mournful attraction grew upon you. Truly a touching and a most lovable aspect. Darrell's eyes moistened.

"Yes, my father, it is so!" he said, softly. "All my sacrifices were in vain. The race is not to be rebuilt! No grandchild of yours will succeed me—me, the last of the old line! Fairthorn, how *can* I love that boy? He may be my heir, and in his veins not a drop of my father's blood!"

"But he has the blood of your father's ancestors; and why must you think of him as your heir?—you, who, if you would but go again into the world, might yet find a fair wi—"

With such a stamp came Darrell's foot upon the floor that the holy and conjugal monosyllable dropping from Fairthorn's lips was as much cut in two as if a shark had snapped it. Unspeakably frightened, the poor man sidled away, thrust himself behind a tall reading-desk, and, peering aslant from that covert, whimpered out, "Don't, don't now—don't be so awful; I did not mean to offend, but I'm always saying something I did not mean; and really you look so young still (coaxingly), and, and—"

Darrell, the burst of rage over, had sunk upon a chair, his face bowed over his hands, and his breast heaving as if with suppressed sobs.

The musician forgot his fear; he sprang forward, almost upsetting the tall desk; he flung himself on his knees at Darrell's feet, and exclaimed, in broken words, "Master, master, forgive me! Beast that I was! Do look up—do smile, or else beat me—kick me."

Darrell's right hand slid gently from his face, and fell into Fairthorn's clasp.

"Hush, hush," muttered the man of granite; "one moment, and it will be over."

One moment? That might be but a figure of speech; yet before Lionel had finished half the canto that was plunging him into fairy-land, Darrell was standing by him with his ordinary, tranquil mien: and Fairthorn's flute from behind the boughs of a neighboring lime-tree was breathing out an air as dulcet as if careless Fauns still piped in Arcady, and Grief were a far dweller on the other side of the mountains, of whom shepherds, reclining under summer leaves, speak as we speak of hydras and unicorns, and things in fable.

On, on swelled the mellow, mellow, witching music; and now the worn man with his secret sorrow, and the boy with his frank, glad laugh, are passing away, side by side, over the turf, with its starry and golden wild-flowers, under the boughs in yon Druid copse, from which they start the ringdove—farther and farther, still side by side, now out of sight, as if the dense green of the summer had closed around them like waves. But still the flute sounds on, and still they hear it, softer and softer, as they go. Hark! do you not hear it—you?

CHAPTER XIV.

There are certain events which to each man's life are as comets to the earth, seemingly strange and erratic portents; distinct from the ordinary lights which guide our course and mark our seasons, yet true to their own laws, potent in their own influences. Philosophy speculates on their effects, and disputes upon their uses; men who do not philosophize regard them as special messengers and bodes of evil.

They came out of the little park into a by-lane; a vast tract of common land, yellow with furze, and undulated with swell and hollow spreading in front; to their right the dark beech-woods, still beneath the weight of the July noon. Lionel had been talking about the *Faerie Queen*, knight-errantry, the sweet, impossible dream-life that, safe from Time, glides by bower and hall, through magic forests and by witching caves, in the world of poet-books. And Darrell listened, and the flute-notes mingled with the atmosphere faint and far off, like voices from that world itself.

Out then they came, this broad waste land before them; and Lionel said, merrily:

"But this is the very scene! Here the young knight, leaving his father's hall, would have checked his *destrier*, glancing wistfully now over that green wild which seems so boundless, now

to the 'umbrageous horror' of those breathless woodlands, and questioned himself which way to take for adventure."

"Yes," said Darrell, coming out from his long reserve on all that concerned his past life —"Yes, and the gold of the gorse-blossoms tempted me; and I took the waste land." He paused a moment, and renewed: "And then, when I had known cities and men, and snatched romance from dull matter-of-fact, then I would have done as civilization does with romance itself—I would have inclosed the waste land for my own aggrandizement. Look," he continued, with a sweep of the hand round the width of prospect, "all that you see to the verge of the horizon, some fourteen years ago, was to have been thrown into the petty paddock we have just quitted, and serve as park round the house I was then building. Vanity of human wishes! What but the several proportions of their common folly distinguishes the baffled squire from the arrested conqueror? Man's characteristic cerebral organ must certainly be acquisitiveness."

"Was it his organ of acquisitiveness that moved Themistocles to boast that 'he could make a small state great?'"

"Well remembered — ingeniously quoted," returned Darrell, with the polite bend of his stately head. "Yes, I suspect that the coveting organ had much to do with the boast. To build a name was the earliest dream of Themistocles, if we are to accept the anecdote that makes him say, 'The trophies of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep.' To build a name, or to create a fortune, are but varying applications of one human passion. The desire of something we have not is the first of our childish remembrances; it matters not what form it takes, what object it longs for; still it is to acquire; it never deserts us while we live."

"And yet, if I might, I should like to ask, what you now desire that you do not possess!"

"I—nothing; but I spoke of the living! I am dead. Only," added Darrell, with his silvery laugh, "I say, as poor Chesterfield said before me, 'it is a secret—keep it.'"

Lionel made no reply; the melancholy of the words saddened him; but Darrell's manner repelled the expression of sympathy or of interest; and the boy fell into conjecture—what had killed to the world this man's intellectual life?

And thus silently they continued to wander on till the sound of the flute had long been lost to their ears. Was the musician playing still?

At length they came round to the other end of Fawley village, and Darrell again became animated.

"Perhaps," said he, returning to the subject of talk that had been abruptly suspended—"perhaps the love of power is at the origin of each restless courtship of Fortune; yet, after all, who has power with less alloy than the village thane? With so little effort, so little thought, the man in the manor-house can make men in the cottage happier here below, and more fit for a hereafter yonder. In leaving the world I come from contest and pilgrimage, like our sires the Crusaders, to reign at home."

As he spoke he entered one of the cottages. An old paralytic man was seated by the fire, hot though the July sun was out of doors; and his wife, of the same age, and almost as helpless, was reading to him a chapter in the Old Testament—the fifth chapter in Genesis, containing the genealogy, age, and death of the patriarchs before the Flood. How the faces of the couple brightened when Darrell entered. "Master Guy!" said the old man, tremulously rising. The world-weary orator and lawyer was still Master Guy to him.

"Sit down Mathew, and let me read you a chapter." Darrell took the Holy Book, and read the Sermon on the Mount. Never had Lionel heard any thing like that reading; the feeling which brought out the depth of the sense, the tones, sweeter than the flute, which clothed the divine words in music. As Darrell ceased, some beauty seemed gone from the day. He lingered a few minutes, talking kindly and familiarly, and then turned into another cottage, where lay a sick woman. He listened to her ailments, promised to send her something to do her good from his own stores, cheered up her spirits, and, leaving her happy, turned to Lionel with a glorious smile, that seemed to ask, "And is there not power in this?"

But it was the sad peculiarity of this remarkable man, that all his moods were subject to rapid and seemingly unaccountable variations. It was as if some great blow had fallen on the mainspring of his organization, and left its original harmony broken up into fragments, each impressive in itself, but running one into the other with an abrupt discord, as a harp played upon by the winds. For, after this evident effort at self-consolation or self-support in soothing or strengthening others, suddenly Darrell's head fell again upon his breast, and he walked on, up the village lane, heeding no longer either the open doors of expectant cottagers, or the salutation of humble passers-by. "And I could have been so happy here!" he said suddenly. "Can I not be so yet? Ay, perhaps, when I am thoroughly old—tied to the world but by the thread of an hour. Old men do seem happy; behind them all memories faint, save those of childhood and sprightly youth; before them, the narrow ford, and the sun dawning up the clouds on the other shore. 'Tis the critical descent into age in which man is surely most troubled; griefs gone, still rankling; nor, strength yet in his limbs, passion yet in his heart, reconciled to what loom nearest in the prospect—the arm-chair and the palsied head. Well! life is a quaint puzzle. Bits the most incongruous join into each other, and the scheme thus gradually becomes symmetrical and clear; when, lo! as the infant claps his hands, and cries, 'See, see! the puzzle is made out!' all the pieces are swept back into the box—black box with the gilded nails. Ho! Lionel, look up; there is our village Church, and here, close at my right, the Church-yard!"

Now while Darrell and his young companion were directing their gaze to the right of the village lane, toward the small gray church—toward the sacred burial-ground in which, here and there among humbler graves, stood the monumental stone inscribed to the memory of some former Darrell, for whose remains the living sod had been preferred to the family vault; while both slowly neared the funeral spot, and leaned, silent and musing, over the rail that fenced it from the animals turned to graze on the

sward of the surrounding green, a foot-traveler, a stranger in the place, loitered on the threshold of the small wayside inn, about fifty yards off to the left of the lane, and looked hard at the still figures of the two kinsmen.

Turning then to the hostess, who was standing somewhat within the threshold, a glass of brandy-and-water in her hand (the third glass that stranger had called for during his half-hour's rest in the hostelry), quoth the man—

"The taller gentleman yonder is surely your Squire, is it not? but who is the shorter and younger person?"

The landlady put forth her head.

"Oh! that is a relation of the Squire's down on a visit, Sir. I heard coachman say that the Squire's taken to him hugely; and they do think at the hall that the young gentleman will be his heir."

"Aha!—indeed—his heir? What is the lad's name? What relation can he be to Mr. Darrell?"

"I don't know what relation exactly, Sir; but he is one of the Haughtons, and they've been kin to the Fawley folks time out of mind."

"Haughton!—aha! Thank you, ma'am. Change, if you please."

The stranger tossed off his dram, and stretched his hand for his change.

"Beg pardon, Sir, but this must be forring money," said the landlady, turning a five-franc piece on her palm with suspicious curiosity.

"Foreign! is it possible?" The stranger dived again into his pocket, and apparently with some difficulty hunted out half a crown.

"Sixpence more, if you please, Sir; three brandies, and bread-and-cheese, and the ale too, Sir."

"How stupid I am! I thought that French coin was a five-shilling piece. I fear I have no English money about me but this half-crown; and I can't ask you to trust me, as you don't know me."

"Oh, Sir, 'tis all one if you know the Squire. You may be passing this way again."

"I shall not forget my debt when I do, you may be sure," said the stranger; and, with a nod, he walked away in the same direction as Darrell and Lionel had already taken—through a turn-stile by a public path that, skirting the church-yard and the neighboring parsonage, led along a corn-field to the demesnes of Fawley.

The path was narrow, the corn rising on either side, so that two persons could not well walk abreast. Lionel was some paces in advance, Darrell walking slow. The stranger followed at a distance; once or twice he quickened his pace, as if resolved to overtake Darrell; then, apparently, his mind misgave him, and he again fell back.

There was something furtive and sinister about the man. Little could be seen of his face, for he wore a large hat of foreign make, slouched deep over his brow, and his lips and jaw were concealed by a dark and full mustache and beard. As much of the general outline of the countenance as remained distinguishable was, nevertheless, decidedly handsome; but a complexion naturally rich in color, seemed to have gained the heated look which comes with the earlier habits of intemperance, before it fades into the leaden hues of the later.

His dress bespoke pretension to a certain rank: but its component parts were strangely ill-assorted, out of date, and out of repair: pearl-colored trowsers, with silk braids down their sides; brodequins to match—Parisian fashion three years back, but the trowsers shabby, the braiding discolored, the brodequins in holes. The coat—once a black evening-dress coat—of a cut a year or two anterior to that of the trowsers; satin facings—cloth napless, satin stained. Over all, a sort of summer traveling-cloak, or rather large cape of a waterproof silk, once the extreme mode with the Lions of the *Chaussée d'Antin* whenever they ventured to rove to Swiss cantons or German spas; but which, from a certain dainty effeminacy in its shape and texture, required the minutest elegance in the general costume of its wearer as well as the cleanliest purity in itself. Worn by this traveler, and well-nigh worn out too, the cape became a finery, mournful as a tattered pennon over a wreck.

Yet in spite of this dress, however unbecoming, shabby, obsolete, a second glance could scarcely fail to note the wearer as a man wonderfully well shaped—tall, slender in the waist, long of limb, but with a girth of chest that showed immense power—one of those rare figures that a female eye would admire for grace—a recruiting sergeant for athletic strength.

But still the man's whole bearing and aspect, even apart from the dismal incongruities of his attire, which gave him the air of a beggared spendthrift, marred the favorable effect that physical comeliness in itself produces. Difficult to describe how—difficult to say why—but there is a look which a man gets, and a gait which he contracts, when the rest of mankind cut him; and this man had that look and that gait.

"So, so," muttered the stranger. "That boy his heir!—so, so. How can I get to speak to him? In his own house he would not see me: it must be as now, in the open air; but how catch him alone? and to lurk in the inn, in his own village—perhaps for a day—to watch an occasion; impossible! Besides, where is the money for it? Courage, courage!" He quickened his pace, pushed back his hat. "Courage! Why not now? Now or never!"

While the man thus mutteringly soliloquized, Lionel had reached the gate which opened into the grounds of Fawley, just in the rear of the little lake. Over the gate he swung himself lightly, and, turning back to Darrell, cried, "Here is the doe waiting to welcome you!"

Just as Darrell, scarcely heeding the exclamation, and with his musing eyes on the ground, approached the gate, a respectful hand opened it wide, a submissive head bowed low, a voice artificially soft faltered forth words, broken and indistinct, but of which those most audible were—"Pardon me—something to communicate—important—hear me."

Darrell started—just as the traveler almost touched him—started—recoiled, as one on whose path rises a wild beast. His bended head became erect, haughty, indignant, defying; but his cheek was pale, and his lip quivered. "You here! You in England—at Fawley! You presume to accost me! You, Sir, you—"

Lionel just caught the sound of the voice as

the doe had come timidly up to him. He turned round sharply, and beheld Darrell's stern, imperious countenance, on which, stern and imperious though it was, a hasty glance could discover, at once, a surprise, that almost bordered upon fear. Of the stranger still holding the gate he saw but the back, and his voice he did not hear, though by the man's gesture he was evidently replying. Lionel paused a moment irresolute; but as the man continued to speak, he saw Darrell's face grow paler and paler, and in the impulse of a vague alarm he hastened toward him; but just within three feet of the spot, Darrell arrested his steps.

"Go home, Lionel; this person would speak to me in private." Then, in a lower tone, he said to the stranger, "Close the gate, Sir; you are standing upon the land of my fathers. If you would speak with me, this way;" and brushing through the corn, Darrell strode toward a patch of waste land that adjoined the field: the man followed him, and both passed from Lionel's eyes. The doe had come to the gate to greet her master; she now rested her nostrils on the bar, with a look disappointed and plaintive.

"Come," said Lionel, "come." The doe would not stir.

So the boy walked on alone, not much occupied with what had just passed. "Doubtless," thought he, "some person in the neighborhood upon country business."

He skirted the lake, and seated himself on a garden bench near the house. What did he there think of?—who knows? Perhaps of the Great World; perhaps of little Sophy! Time fled on: the sun was receding in the west, when Darrell hurried past him without speaking, and entered the house.

The host did not appear at dinner, nor all that evening. Mr. Mills made an excuse—Mr. Darrell did not feel very well.

Fairthorn had Lionel all to himself, and having within the last few days reindulged in open cordiality to the young guest, he was especially communicative that evening. He talked much on Darrell, and with all the affection that, in spite of his fear, the poor flute-player felt for his ungracious patron. He told many anecdotes of the stern man's tender kindness to all that came within his sphere. He told also anecdotes more striking of the kind man's sternness where some obstinate prejudice, some ruling passion, made him "granite."

"Lord, my dear young Sir," said Fairthorn, "be his most bitter open enemy, and fall down in the mire, the first hand to help you would be Guy Darrell's; but be his professed friend, and betray him to the worth of a straw, and never try to see his face again if you are wise—the most forgiving and the least forgiving of human beings. But—"

The study door noiselessly opened, and Darrell's voice called out,

"Fairthorn, let me speak with you."

CHAPTER XV.

Every street has two sides, the shady side and the sunny. When two men shake hands and part, mark which of the two takes the sunny side; he will be the younger man of the two.

The next morning, neither Darrell nor Fairthorn appeared at breakfast; but as soon as Lionel had concluded that meal, Mr. Mills informed him, with customary politeness, that Mr. Darrell wished to speak with him in the study. Study, across the threshold of which Lionel had never yet set footstep! He entered it now with a sentiment of mingled curiosity and awe. Nothing in it remarkable, save the portrait of the host's father over the mantle-piece. Books strewed tables, chairs, and floors in the disorder loved by habitual students. Near the window was a glass bowl containing gold fish, and close by, in its cage, a singing-bird. Darrell might exist without companionship in the human species, but not without something which he protected and cherished — a bird — even a fish.

Darrell looked really ill; his keen eye was almost dim, and the lines in his face seemed deeper. But he spoke with his usual calm passionless melody of voice.

"Yes," he said, in answer to Lionel's really anxious inquiry; "I am ill. Idle persons like me give way to illness. When I was a busy man, I never did; and then illness gave way to me. My general plans are thus, if not actually altered, at least hurried to their consummation sooner than I expected. Before you came here, I told you to come soon, or you might not find me. I meant to go abroad this summer; I shall now start at once. I need the change of scene and air. You will return to London to-day."

"To-day! You are not angry with me?"

"Angry! boy and cousin—no!" resumed Darrell, in a tone of unusual tenderness. "Angry—fie! But since the parting must be, 'tis well to abridge the pain of long farewells. You must wish, too, to see your mother, and thank her for rearing you up so that you may step from poverty into ease with a head erect. You will give to Mrs. Haughton this letter: for yourself, your inclinations seem to tend toward the army. But before you decide on that career, I should like you to see something more of the world. Call to-morrow on Colonel Morley, in Curzon Street: this is his address. He will receive by to-day's post a note from me, requesting him to advise you. Follow his counsels in what belongs to the world. He is a man of the world—a distant connection of mine—who will be kind to you for my sake. Is there more to say? Yes. It seems an ungracious speech; but I should speak it. Consider yourself sure from me of an independent income. Never let idle sycophants lead you into extravagance, by telling you that you will have more. But indulge not the expectation, however plausible, that you will be my heir."

"Mr. Darrell—oh, Sir—"

"Hush—the expectation would be reasonable; but I am a strange being. I might marry again—have heirs of my own. Eh, Sir—why not?" Darrell spoke these last words almost fiercely, and fixed his eyes on Lionel as he repeated—"why not?" But seeing that the boy's face evinced no surprise, the expression of his own relaxed, and he continued calmly — "Eno'; what I have thus rudely said was kindly meant. It is a treason to a young man to let him count

on a fortune which at last is left away from him. Now, Lionel, go; enjoy your spring of life! Go, hopeful and light-hearted. If sorrow reach you, battle with it; if error mislead you, come fearlessly to me for counsel. Why, boy—what is this—tears? Tut, tut."

"It is your goodness," faltered Lionel. "I can not help it. And is there nothing I can do for you in return?"

"Yes, much. Keep your name free from stain, and your heart open to such noble emotions as awaken tears like those. Ah, by-the-by, I heard from my lawyer to-day about your poor little *protégé*. Not found yet, but he seems sanguine of quick success. You shall know the moment I hear more."

"You will write to me then, Sir, and I may write to you?"

"As often as you please. Always direct to me here."

"Shall you be long abroad?"

Darrell's brows met. "I don't know," said he, curtly. "Adieu."

He opened the door as he spoke.

Lionel looked at him with wistful yearning, filial affection, through his swimming eyes. "God bless you, Sir," he murmured simply, and passed away.

"That blessing should have come from me!" said Darrell to himself, as he turned back, and stood on his solitary hearth. "But they on whose heads I once poured a blessing, where are they—where? And that man's tale, reviving the audacious fable which the other, and I verily believe the less guilty knave of the two, sought to palm on me years ago! Stop; let me weigh well what he said. If it were true! if it were true! Oh, shame, shame!"

Folding his arms tightly on his breast, Darrell paced the room with slow measured strides, pondering deeply. He was, indeed, seeking to suppress feeling, and to exercise only judgment; and his reasoning process seemed at length fully to satisfy him, for his countenance gradually cleared, and a triumphant smile passed across it. "A lie—certainly a palpable and gross lie; lie it must and shall be. Never will I accept it as truth. Father" (looking full at the portrait over the mantle-shelf), "father, fear not—never—never!"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

Certes, the Lizard is a shy and timorous creature. He runs into chinks and crannies if you come too near to him, and sheds his very tail for fear, if you catch it by the tip. He has not his being in good society—no one cages him, no one pets. He is an idle vagrant. But when he steals through the green herbage, and basks unmolested in the sun, he crowds perhaps as much enjoyment into one summer hour as a parrot, however pampered and erudite, spreads over a whole drawing-room life spent in saying, "How d'ye do?" and "Pretty Poll."

On that dull and sombre summer morning in which the grandfather and grandchild departed from the friendly roof of Mr. Merle, very dull and very sombre were the thoughts of little Sophy. She walked slowly behind the gray cripple who had need to lean so heavily on his staff, and her eye had not even a smile for the golden buttercups that glittered on dewy meads alongside the barren road.

Thus had they proceeded apart and silent till they had passed the second milestone. There, Waife, rousing from his own reveries, which were perhaps yet more dreary than those of the dejected child, halted abruptly, passed his hand once or twice rapidly over his forehead, and turning round to Sophy, looked into her face with great kindness as she came slowly to his side.

"You are sad, little one?" said he.

"Very sad, Grandy."

"And displeased with me? Yes, displeased that I have taken you suddenly away from the pretty young gentleman who was so kind to you, without encouraging the chance that you were to meet with him again."

"It was not like you, Grandy," answered Sophy; and her under-lip slightly pouted, while the big tears swelled to her eye.

"True," said the vagabond; "any thing resembling common-sense is not like me. But don't you think that I did what I felt was best for you? Must I not have some good cause for it, whenever I have the heart deliberately to vex you?"

Sophy took his hand and pressed it, but she could not trust herself to speak, for she felt that at such effort she would have burst out into hearty crying. Then Waife proceeded to utter many of those wise sayings, old as the hills, and as high above our sorrows as hills are from the valley in which we walk. He said how foolish it was to unsettle the mind by preposterous fancies and impossible hopes. The pretty young gentleman could never be any thing to her, nor she to the pretty young gentleman. It might be very well for the pretty young gentleman to promise to correspond with her, but as soon as he returned to his friends he would have other things to think of, and she would soon be forgotten; while she, on the contrary, would be thinking of him, and the Thames, and the butterflies, and find hard life still more irksome. Of all this, and much more, in the general way of consolers who set out on the principle that grief is a matter of logic, did Gentleman Waife deliver himself with a vigor of ratiocination which admitted of no reply, and conveyed not a particle of comfort. And feeling this, that great Actor—not that he was acting then—suddenly stopped, clasped the child in his arms, and murmured in broken accents—"But if I see you thus cast down, I shall have no strength left to hobble on through the world; and the sooner I lie down, and the dust is shoveled over me, why, the better for you; for it seems that Heaven sends you friends, and I tear you from them."

And then Sophy fairly gave way to her sobs; she twined her little arms round the old man's neck convulsively, kissed his rough face with imploring pathetic fondness, and forced out through her tears, "Don't talk so! I've been ungrateful and wicked. I don't care for any one but my own dear, dear Grandy."

After this little scene they both composed themselves, and felt much lighter of heart. They pursued their journey—no longer apart, but side by side, and the old man leaning, though very lightly, on the child's arm. But there was no immediate reaction from gloom to gayety. Waife began talking in softened under-tones, and vaguely, of his own past afflictions; and partial as was the reference, how vast did the old man's sorrows seem beside the child's regrets; and yet he commented on them as if rather in pitying her state than grieving for his own.

"Ah! at your age, my darling, I had not your troubles and hardships. I had not to trudge these dusty roads on foot with a broken-down, good-for-nothing scatterling. I trod rich carpets, and slept under silken curtains. I took the air in gay carriages—I such a scape-grace—and you, little child—you so good! All gone! all melted away from me, and not able now to be sure that you will have a crust of bread this day week."

"Oh, yes! I shall have bread, and you, too, Grandy!" cried Sophy, with cheerful voice. "It was you who taught me to pray to God, and said that in all your troubles God had been good to you; and He has been so good to me since I prayed to Him; for I have no dreadful Mrs. Crane to beat me now, and say things more hard to bear than beating—and you have taken me to yourself. How I prayed for that! And I take care of you, too, Grandy, don't I? I prayed for *that*, too; and as to carriages," added Sophy, with superb air, "I don't care if I am never in a carriage as long as I live; and you know I *have* been in a van, which is bigger than a carriage, and I didn't like that at all. But how came people to behave so ill to you, Grandy?"

"I never said people behaved ill to me, Sophy."

"Did not they take away the carpets and silk curtains, and all the fine things you had as a little boy?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Waife, with a puzzled look, "that people actually took them away—but they melted away. However, I had much still to be thankful for—I was so strong, and had such high spirits, Sophy, and found people not behaving ill to me—quite the contrary—so kind. I found no Crane (she monster) as you did, my little angel. Such prospects before me, if I had walked straight toward them! But I followed my own fancy, which led me zigzag; and now that I would stray back into the high-road, you see before you a man whom a Justice of the Peace could send to the tread-mill for presuming to live without a livelihood."

Sophy. "Not without a livelihood? the what did you call it! independent income—that is, the Three Pounds, Grandy?"

Waife (admiringly). "Sensible child! That is true. Yes, Heaven *is* very good to me still. Ah! what signifies fortune? How happy I was with my dear Lizzy, and yet no two persons could live more from hand to mouth."

Sophy (rather jealously). "Lizzy?"

Waife (with moistened eyes, and looking down). "My wife. She was only spared to me two years—such sunny years! And how grateful I ought to be that she did not live longer. She was saved—such—such—such shame and misery!" A long pause.

Waife resumed, with a rush from memory, as if plucking himself from the claws of a harpy—"What's the good of looking back! A man's gone self is a dead thing. It is not I—now tramping this road, with you to lean upon—whom I see when I would turn to look behind on that which I once was—it is another being, defunct and buried; and when I say to myself, 'That being did so and so,' it is like reading an epitaph on a tombstone. So, at last, solitary and hopeless, I came back to my own land; and I found you—a blessing greater than I had ever dared to count on. And how was I to maintain you, and take you from that long-nosed alligator called Crane, and put you in womanly, gentle hands, for I never thought then of subjecting you to all you have since undergone with me. I who did not know one useful thing in life by which a man can turn a penny. And then, as I was all alone in a village ale-house, on my way back from—it does not signify from what, or from whence, but I was disappointed and despairing—Providence mercifully threw in my way—Mr. Rugge—and ordained me to be of great service to that ruffian—and that ruffian of great use to me."

Sophy. "Ah! how was that?"

Waife. "It was Fair-time in the village wherein I stopped, and Rugge's principal actor was taken off by *delirium tremens*, which is Latin for a disease common to men who eat little and drink much. Rugge came into the ale-house, bemoaning his loss. A bright thought struck me. Once in my day I had been used to acting. I offered to try my chance on Mr. Rugge's stage; he caught at me—I at him. I succeeded; we came to terms, and my little Sophy was thus taken from that ringleted crocodile, and placed with Christian females who wore caps and read their Bible. Is not Heaven good to us, Sophy—and to me, too—me, such a scamp?"

"And you did all that—suffered all that for me?"

"Suffered—but I liked it. And, besides, I must have done something; and there were reasons—in short, I was quite happy—no, not actually happy, but comfortable and merry. Providence gives thick hides to animals that must exist in cold climates; and to the man whom it reserves for sorrow, Providence gives a coarse, jovial temper. Then, when by a mercy I was saved from what I most disliked and dreaded, and never would have thought of but that I fancied it might be a help to you—I mean the London stage—and had that bad accident on the railway, how did it end? Oh! in saving you (and Waife closed his eyes and shuddered)—in saving your destiny from what might be much worse for you, body and soul, than the worst that has happened to you with me. And so we have been thrown together; and so you have supported me; and so, when we could exist without Mr. Rugge, Providence got rid of him

for us. And so we are now walking along the high-road; and through yonder trees you can catch a peep of the roof under which we are about to rest for a while; and there you will learn what I have done with the Three Pounds!"

"It is not the Spotted Boy, Grandy?"

"No," said Waife, sighing; "the Spotted Boy is a handsome income; but let us only trust in Providence, and I should not wonder if our new acquisition proved a monstrous—"

"Monstrous!"

"Piece of good fortune."

CHAPTER II.

The Investment revealed.

GENTLEMAN Waife passed through a turnstile, down a narrow lane, and reached a solitary cottage. He knocked at the door; an old peasant woman opened it, and dropped him a civil courtesy. "Indeed, Sir, I am glad you are come. I'se most afeard he be dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Waife. "Oh, Sophy, if he should be dead!"

"Who?"

Waife did not heed the question. "What makes you think him dead?" said he, fumbling in his pockets, from which he at last produced a key. "You have not been disobeying my strict orders, and tampering with the door?"

"Lor' love ye, no, Sir. But he made such a noise a fust—awful! And now he's as still as a corpse. And I did peep through the keyhole, and he was stretched stark."

"Hunger, perhaps," said the Comedian; "'tis his way when he has been kept fasting much over his usual hours. Follow me, Sophy." He put aside the woman, entered the sanded kitchen, ascended a stair that led from it; and Sophy following, stopped at a door and listened: not a sound. Timidly he unlocked the portals and crept in, when, suddenly, such a rush—such a spring, and a mass of something vehement yet soft, dingy yet whitish, whirled past the Actor, and came pounce against Sophy, who therewith uttered a shriek. "Stop him, stop him, for Heaven's sake!" cried Waife. "Shut the door below—seize him!" Down stairs, however, went the mass, and down stairs after it hobbled Waife, returning in a few moments with the recaptured and mysterious fugitive. "There," he cried, triumphantly, to Sophy, who, standing against the wall with her face buried in her frock, long refused to look up—"there—tame as a lamb, and knows me. See"—he seated himself on the floor, and Sophy, hesitatingly opening her eyes, beheld gravely gazing at her from under a profusion of shaggy locks an enormous—

CHAPTER III.

Dénouement.

POODLE!

CHAPTER IV.

Zoology in connection with History.

"WALK to that young lady, Sir—walk, I say." The poodle slowly rose on his hind-legs, and, with an aspect inexpressibly solemn, advanced toward Sophy, who hastily receded into the room in which the creature had been confined.

"Make a bow—*no*—a *bow*, Sir; that is right: you can shake hands another time. Run down, Sophy, and ask for his dinner."

"Yes—that I will;" and Sophy flew down the stairs.

The dog, still on his hind-legs, stood in the centre of the floor, dignified, but evidently expectant.

"That will do; lie down and die. Die this moment, Sir." The dog stretched himself out, closed his eyes, and to all appearance gave up the ghost. "A most splendid investment," said Waife, with enthusiasm; "and, upon the whole, dog-cheap. Ho! *you* are not to bring up his dinner; it is not you who are to make friends with the dog; it is my little girl; send her up; Sophy, Sophy."

"She be fritted, Sir," said the woman, holding a plate of canine comestibles; "but lauk, Sir; ben't he really dead?"

"Sophy, Sophy."

"Please let me stay here, Grandy," said Sophy's voice from the foot of the stairs.

"Nonsense! it is sixteen hours since he has had a morsel to eat. And he will never bite the hand that feeds him now. Come up, I say."

Sophy slowly reascended, and Waife, summoning the poodle to life, insisted upon the child's feeding him. And indeed, when that act of charity was performed, the dog evinced his gratitude by a series of unsophisticated bounds and waggings of the tail, which gradually removed Sophy's apprehensions, and laid the foundation for that intimate friendship, which is the natural relation between child and dog.

"And how did you come by him?" asked Sophy; "and is this really the—the INVESTMENT?"

"Shut the door carefully, but see first that the woman is not listening. Lie down, Sir, there, at the feet of the young lady. Good dog. How did I come by him? I will tell you. The first day we arrived at the village which we have just left, I went into the tobacconist's. While I was buying my ounce of canaster, that dog entered the shop. In his mouth was a sixpence wrapped in paper. He lifted himself on his hind-legs, and laid his missive on the counter. The shopwoman—you know her, Mrs. Traill—unfolded the paper and read the order. 'Clever dog that, Sir,' said she. 'To fetch and carry?' said I, indifferently. 'More than that, Sir; you shall see. The order is for two-penn'orth of snuff. The dog knows he is to take back fourpence. I will give him a penny short.' So she took the sixpence and gave the dog threepence out of it. The dog shook his head and looked gravely into her face. 'That's all you'll get,' said she. The dog shook his head again, and tapped his paw once on the counter, as much as to say, 'I am not to be done—a penny more, if you please.' 'If you won't take that, you shall have nothing,' said Mrs. Traill, and she took back the threepence."

"Dear! and what did the dog do then—snarl or bite?"

"Not so; he knew he was in his rights, and did not lower himself by showing bad temper. The dog looked quietly round, saw a basket

which contained two or three pounds of candles lying in a corner for the shopboy to take to some customer; took up the basket in his mouth, and turned tail, as much as to say, 'Tit for tat then.' He understood, you see, what is called the 'law of reprisals.' 'Come back this moment,' cried Mrs. Traill. The dog walked out of the shop; then she ran after him, and counted the fourpence before him, on which he dropped the basket, picked up the right change, and went off demurely. 'To whom does that poodle belong?' said I. 'To a poor drunken man,' said Mrs. Traill; 'I wish it was in better hands.' 'So do I, ma'am,' answered I. 'Did he teach it?' 'No, it was taught by his brother, who was an old soldier, and died in his house two weeks ago. It knows a great many tricks, and is quite young. It might make a fortune as a show, Sir.' So I was thinking. I inquired the owner's address, called on him, and found him disposed to sell the dog. But he asked £3, a sum that seemed out of the question then. Still I kept the dog in my eye; called every day to make friends with it, and ascertain its capacities. And at last, thanks to you, Sophy, I bought the dog; and what is more, as soon as I had two golden sovereigns to show, I got him for that sum, and we have still £1 left (besides small savings from our lost salaries) to go to the completion of his education, and the advertisement of his merits. I kept this a secret from Merle—from all. I would not even let the drunken owner know where I took the dog to yesterday. I brought it here, where, I learned in the village, there were two rooms to let—locked it up—and my story is told."

"But why keep it such a secret?"

"Because I don't want Rugge to trace us. He might do one a mischief; because I have a grand project of genteel position and high prices for the exhibition of that dog. And why should it be known where we come from, or what we were? And because, if the owner knew where to find the dog, he might decoy it back from us. Luckily, he had not made the dog so fond of him but what, unless it be decoyed, it will accustom itself to us. And now I propose that we should stay a week or so here, and devote ourselves exclusively to developing the native powers of this gifted creature. Get out the dominoes."

"What is his name?"

"Ha! that is the first consideration. What shall be his name?"

"Has not he one already?"

"Yes—trivial and unattractive—Mop! In private life it might pass. But in public life—give a dog a bad name, and hang him. Mop, indeed!"

Therewith Mop, considering himself appealed to, rose and stretched himself.

"Right," said Gentleman Waife; "stretch yourself; you decidedly require it."

CHAPTER V.

Mop becomes a Personage. Much thought is bestowed on the verbal dignities, without which a Personage would become a Mop. The importance of names is apparent in all history. If Augustus had called himself king, Rome would have risen against him as a Tarquin; so he remained a simple equestrian, and modestly called himself Imperator. Mop chooses his own title in a most mysterious manner, and ceases to be Mop.

"The first noticeable defect in your name of Mop," said Gentleman Waife, "is, as you yourself denote, the want of elongation. Monosyllables are not imposing, and in striking compositions their meaning is elevated by periphrasis; that is to say, Sophy, that what before was a short truth, an elegant author elaborates into a long stretch."

"Certainly," said Sophy, thoughtfully; "I don't think the name of Mop would draw! Still he is very like a Mop."

"For that reason the name degrades him the more, and lowers him from an intellectual phenomenon to a physical attribute, which is vulgar. I hope that that dog will enable us to rise in the Scale of Being. For whereas we in acting could only command a threepenny audience—reserved seats a shilling—he may aspire to half-crowns and dress-boxes, that is, if we can hit on a name which inspires respect. Now, although the dog is big, it is not by his size that he is to become famous, or we might call him Hercules or Goliah; neither is it by his beauty, or Adonis would not be unsuitable. It is by his superior sagacity and wisdom. And there I am puzzled to find his prototype among mortals; for, perhaps, it may be my ignorance of history—"

"You ignorant, indeed, grandfather!"

"But considering the innumerable millions who have lived on the earth, it is astonishing how few I can call to mind who have left behind them a proverbial renown for wisdom. There is, indeed, Solomon, but he fell off at the last; and as he belongs to sacred history, we must not take a liberty with his name. Who is there very, very, very wise besides Solomon? Think, Sophy—profane history."

Sophy (after a musing pause). "Puss in Boots."

"Well, he *was* wise; but then he was not human; he was a cat. Ha! Socrates. Shall we call him Socrates, Socrates, Socrates?"

Sophy. "Socrates, Socrates."

Mop yawned.

Waife. "He don't take to Socrates—prosy!"

Sophy. "Ah, Mr. Merle's book about the Brazen Head, *Friar Bacon!* He must have been very wise."

Waife. "Not bad; mysterious, but not recondite; historical, yet familiar. What does Mop say to it? Friar, Friar, Friar Bacon, Sir—Friar."

Sophy (coaxingly). "Friar."

Mop, evidently conceiving that appeal is made to some other personage, canine or human, not present, rouses up, walks to the door, smells at the chink, returns, shakes his head, and rests on his haunches, eying his two friends superciliously.

Sophy. "He does not take to that name."

Waife. "He has his reasons for it; and, indeed, there are many worthy persons who disapprove of any thing that savors of magical practices. Mop intimates that, on entering public life, one should beware of offending the respectable prejudices of a class."

Mr. Waife then, once more resorting to the recesses of scholastic memory, plucked therefrom, somewhat by the head and shoulders, sundry names reverenced in a by-gone age. He

thought of the seven wise men of Greece, but could only recall the nomenclature of two out of the seven—a sad proof of the distinction between collegiate fame and popular renown. He called Thales; he called Bion. Mop made no response. "Wonderful intelligence!" said Waife; "he knows that Thales and Bion would not draw! —obsolete."

Mop was equally mute to Aristotle. He pricked up his ears at Plato, perhaps because the sound was not wholly dissimilar from that of Ponto—a name of which he might have had vague reminiscences. The Romans not having cultivated an original philosophy, though they contrived to produce great men without it, Waife passed by that perished people. He crossed to China, and tried Confucius. Mop had evidently never heard of him. "I am at the end of my list, so far as the wise men are concerned," said Waife, wiping his forehead. "If Mop were to distinguish himself by valor, one would find heroes by the dozen—Achilles, and Hector, and Julius Cæsar, and Pompey, and Bonaparte, and Alexander the Great, and the Duke of Marlborough. Or, if he wrote poetry, we could fit him to a hair. But wise men certainly are scarce, and when one has hit on a wise man's name, it is so little known to the vulgar that it would carry no more weight with it than Spot or Toby. But necessarily some name the dog must have, and take to, sympathetically."

Sophy meanwhile had extracted the dominoes from Waife's bundle, and with the dominoes an alphabet and a multiplication-table in printed capitals. As the Comedian's one eye rested upon the last, he exclaimed, "But after all, Mop's great strength will probably be in arithmetic, and the science of numbers is the root of all wisdom. Besides, every man, high and low, wants to make a fortune, and associations connected with addition and multiplication are always pleasing. Who, then, is the sage at computation most universally known? Unquestionably *Cocker!* He must take to that—Cocker, Cocker (commandingly), C-o-c-k-e-r," with persuasive sweetness.

Mop looked puzzled; he put his head first on one side, then the other.

Sophy (with mellifluous endearment). "Cocker, good Cocker; Cocker dear."

Both. "Cocker, Cocker, Cocker!"

Excited and bewildered, Mop put up his head, and gave vent to his perplexities in a long and lugubrious howl, to which certainly none who heard it could have desired addition or multiplication.

"Stop this instant, Sir—stop; I shoot you! You are dead—down!" Waife adjusted his staff to his shoulder gun-wise; and at the word of command, Down, Mop was on his side, stiff and lifeless. "Still," said Waife, "a name connected with profound calculation would be the most appropriate; for instance, Sir Isaac—"

Before the comedian could get out the word Newton, Mop had sprung to his four feet, and, with wagging tail and wriggling back, evinced a sense of beatified recognition.

"Astounding!" said Waife, rather awed. "Can it be the name? Impossible. Sir Isaac, Sir Isaac!"

"Bow wow!" answered Mop, joyously.

"If there be any truth in the doctrine of metempsychosis!" faltered Gentleman Waife, "if the great Newton could have transmigrated into that incomparable animal. Newton, Newton." To that name Mop made no obeisance, but, evidently still restless, walked round the room, smelling at every corner, and turning to look back with inquisitive earnestness at his new master.

"He does not seem to catch at the name of Newton," said Waife, trying it thrice again, and vainly, "and yet he seems extremely well versed in the principle of gravity. Sir Isaac!" The dog bounded toward him, put his paws on his shoulders, and licked his face. "Just cut out those figures carefully, my dear, and see if we can get him to tell us how much twice ten are—I mean by addressing him as Sir Isaac."

Sophy cut the figures from the multiplication-table, and arranged them, at Waife's instruction, in a circle on the floor. "Now, Sir Isaac." Mop lifted a paw, and walked deliberately round the letters. "Now, Sir Isaac, how much are ten times two?" Mop deliberately made his survey and calculation, and pausing at twenty stooped, and took the letters in his mouth.

"It is not natural," cried Sophy, much alarmed. "It must be wicked, and I'd rather have nothing to do with it, please."

"Silly child. He was but obeying my sign. He had been taught that trick already under the name of Mop. The only strange thing is, that he should do it also under the name of Sir Isaac, and much more cheerfully too. However, whether he has been the great Newton or not, a live dog is better than a dead lion. But it is clear that, in acknowledging the name of Sir Isaac, he does not encourage us to take that of Newton—and he is right; for it might be thought unbecoming to apply to an animal, however extraordinary, who, by the severity of fortune is compelled to exhibit his talents for a small pecuniary reward, the family name of so great a philosopher. Sir Isaac, after all, is a vague appellation—any dog has a right to be Sir Isaac —Newton may be left conjectural. Let us see if we can add to our arithmetical information. Look at me, Sir Isaac." Sir Isaac looked, and grinned affectionately; and under that title learned a new combination with a facility that might have relieved Sophy's mind of all superstitious belief that the philosopher was resuscitated in the dog, had she known that in life that great master of calculations the most abstruse could not accurately cast up a simple sum in addition. Nothing brought him to the end of his majestic tether like dot and carry one. Notable type of our human incompleteness, where men might deem our studies had made us most complete. Notable type, too, of that grandest order of all human genius which seems to arrive at results by intuition, which a child might pose by a row of figures on a slate —while it is solving the laws that link the stars to infinity. But *revenons à nos moutons*, what the astral attraction that incontestably bound the reminiscences of Mop to the cognominal distinction of Sir Isaac? I had prepared a very erudite and subtle treatise upon this query, enlivened by quotations from the ancient Mystics —such as Iamblichus and Proclus, as well as by a copious reference to the doctrine of the more modern Spiritualists, from Sir Kenelm Digby

and Swedenborg, to Monsieur Cahagnet and Judge Edmonds: it was to be called Inquiry into the Law of Affinities, by Philomopsos: when, unluckily for my treatise, I arrived at the knowledge of a fact which, though it did not render the treatise less curious, knocked on the head the theory upon which it was based. The baptismal name of the old soldier, Mop's first proprietor and earliest preceptor, was Isaac; and his master being called in the homely household by that Christian name, the sound had entered into Mop's youngest and most endeared associations. His canine affections had done much toward ripening his scholastic education. "Where is Isaac?" "Call Isaac!" "Fetch Isaac his hat," etc., etc. Stilled was that name when the old soldier died; but when heard again, Mop's heart was moved, and in missing the old master, he felt more at home with the new. As for the title, "Sir," it was a mere expletive in his ears. Such was the fact, and such the deduction to be drawn from it. Not that it will satisfy every one. I know that philosophers who deny all that they have not witnessed, and refuse to witness what they resolve to deny, will reject the story *in toto;* and will prove, by reference to their own dogs, that a dog never recognizes the name of his master —never yet could be taught arithmetic. I know also that there are Mystics who will prefer to believe that Mop was in direct spiritual communication with unseen Isaacs, or in a state of clairvoyance, or under the influence of the odic fluid. But did we ever yet find in human reason a question with only one side to it? Is not truth a polygon? Have not sages arisen in our day to deny even the principle of gravity, for which we had been so long contentedly taking the word of the great Sir Isaac? It is that blessed spirit of controversy which keeps the world going; and it is that which, perhaps, explains why Mr. Waife, when his memory was fairly put to it, could remember, out of the history of the myriads who have occupied our planet from the date of Adam to that in which I now write, so very few men whom the world will agree to call wise, and out of that very few so scant a percentage with names sufficiently known to make them more popularly significant of pre-eminent sagacity than if they had been called —Mops.

CHAPTER VI.

The Vagrant having got his dog, proceeds to hunt Fortune with it, leaving behind him a trap to catch rats. What the trap does catch is "just like his luck!"

Sir Isaac, to designate him by his new name, improved much upon acquaintance. He was still in the ductile season of youth, and took to learning as an amusement to himself. His last master, a stupid sot, had not gained his affections—and perhaps even the old soldier, though gratefully remembered and mourned, had not stolen into his innermost heart, as Waife and Sophy gently contrived to do. In short, in a very few days he became perfectly accustomed and extremely attached to them. When Waife had ascertained the extent of his accomplishments, and added somewhat to their range in matters which cost no great trouble, he applied himself to the task of composing a little drama, which might bring them all into more interesting play, and in which, though Sophy and himself were performers, the dog had the *premier rôle*. And as soon as this was done, and the dog's performances thus ranged into methodical order and sequence, he resolved to set off to a considerable town at some distance, and to which Mr. Rugge was no visitor.

His bill at the cottage made but slight inroad into his pecuniary resources; for in the intervals of leisure from his instructions to Sir Isaac, Waife had performed various little services to the lone widow with whom they lodged, which Mrs. Saunders (such was her name) insisted upon regarding as money's worth. He had repaired and regulated to a minute an old clock which had taken no note of time for the last three years; he had mended all the broken crockery by some cement of his own invention, and for which she got him the materials. And here his ingenuity was remarkable, for when there was only a fragment to be found of a cup, and a fragment or two of a saucer, he united them both into some pretty form, which, if not useful, at all events looked well on a shelf. He bound, in smart, showy papers, sundry tattered old books which had belonged to his landlady's defunct husband, a Scotch gardener, and which she displayed on a side-table, under the Japan tea-tray. More than all, he was of service to her in her vocation; for Mrs. Saunders eked out a small pension—which she derived from the affectionate providence of her Scotch husband, in insuring his life in her favor—by the rearing and sale of poultry; and Waife saved her the expense of a carpenter by the construction of a new coop, elevated above the reach of the rats, who had hitherto made sad ravage among the chickens; while he confided to her certain secrets in the improvement of breed and the cheaper processes of fattening, which excited her gratitude no less than her wonder. "The fact is," said Gentleman Waife, "that my life has known make-shifts. Once, in a foreign country, I kept poultry upon the principle that the poultry should keep me."

Strange it was to notice such versatility of invention, such readiness of resource, such familiarity with divers nooks and crannies in the practical experience of life, in a man now so hard put to it for a livelihood. There are persons, however, who might have a good stock of talent, if they did not turn it all into small change. And you, reader, know as well as I do, that when a sovereign or a shilling is once broken into, the change scatters and dispends itself in a way quite unaccountable. Still coppers are useful in household bills; and when Waife was really at a pinch, somehow or other, by hook or by crook, he scraped together intellectual halfpence enough to pay his way.

Mrs. Saunders grew quite fond of her lodgers. Waife she regarded as a prodigy of genius; Sophy was the prettiest and best of children; Sir Isaac, she took for granted, was worthy of his owners. But the Comedian did not confide to her his dog's learning, nor the use to which he designed to put it. And in still greater precaution, when he took his leave, he extracted from Mrs. Saunders a solemn promise that she would set no one on his track, in case of impertinent inquiries.

"You see before you," said he, "a man who has enemies—such as rats are to your chickens: chickens despise rats when raised, as yours are now, above the reach of claws and teeth. Some day or other I may so raise a coop for that little one—I am too old for coops. Meanwhile, if a rat comes sneaking here after us, send it off the wrong way, with a flea in its ear."

Mrs. Saunders promised, between tears and laughter; blessed Waife, kissed Sophy, patted Sir Isaac, and stood long at her threshold watching the three, as the early sun lit their forms receding in the green, narrow lane—dew-drops sparkling on the hedgerows, and the sky-lark springing upward from the young corn.

Then she slowly turned in-doors, and her home seemed very solitary. We can accustom ourselves to loneliness, but we should beware of infringing the custom. Once admit two or three faces seated at your hearthside, or gazing out from your windows on the laughing sun, and when they are gone, they carry off the glow from your grate and the sunbeam from your panes. Poor Mrs. Saunders! in vain she sought to rouse herself, to put the rooms to rights, to attend to the chickens, to distract her thoughts. The one-eyed cripple, the little girl, the shaggy-faced dog, still haunted her; and when at noon she dined all alone off the remnants of the last night's social supper, the very click of the renovated clock seemed to say, "Gone, gone;" and muttering, "Ah! gone," she reclined back on her chair, and indulged herself in a good womanlike cry. From this luxury she was startled by a knock at the door. "Could they have come back?" No; the door opened, and a genteel young man, in a black coat and white neckloth, stepped in.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am—your name's Saunders—sell poultry?"

"At your service, Sir. Spring chickens!" Poor people, whatever their grief, must sell their chickens, if they have any to sell.

"Thank you, ma'am; not at this moment. The fact is, that I call to make some inquiries. Have not you lodgers here?"

Lodgers! at that word the expanding soul of Mrs. Saunders reclosed hermetically; the last warning of Waife revibrated in her ears: this white-neckclothed gentleman, was he not a rat?

"No, Sir, I han't no lodgers."

"But you have had some lately, eh? a crippled elderly man and a little girl."

"Don't know any thing about them; leastways," said Mrs. Saunders, suddenly remembering that she was told less to deny facts than to send inquirers upon wrong directions—"leastways, at this blessed time. Pray, Sir, what makes you ask?"

"Why, I was instructed to come down to ——, and find out where this person, one William Waife, had gone. Arrived yesterday, ma'am. All I could hear is, that a person answering to his description left the place several days ago, and had been seen by a boy, who was tending sheep, to come down the lane to your house, and you were supposed to have lodgers (You take lodgers sometimes, I think, ma'am); because you had been buying some trifling articles of food not in your usual way of custom. Circumstantial evidence, ma'am—you can have no motive to conceal the truth."

"I should think not indeed, Sir," retorted Mrs. Saunders, whom the ominous words "circumstantial evidence" set doubly on her guard. "I did see a gentleman such as you mention, and a pretty young lady, about ten days agone, or so, and they did lodge here a night or two, but they are gone to—"

"Yes, ma'am—gone where?"

"Lunnon."

"Really—very likely. By the train or on foot?"

"On foot, I s'pose."

"Thank you, ma'am. If you should see them again, or hear where they are, oblige me by conveying this card to Mr. Waife. My employer, ma'am, Mr. Gotobed, Craven Street, Strand—eminent solicitor. He has something of importance to communicate to Mr. Waife."

"Yes, Sir—a lawyer; I understand." And as of all rat-like animals in the world Mrs. Saunders had the ignorance to deem a lawyer was the most emphatically devouring, she congratulated herself with her whole heart on the white lies she had told in favor of the intended victims.

The blackcoated gentleman having thus obeyed his instructions, and attained his object, nodded, went his way, and regained the fly which he had left at the turnstile. "Back to the inn," cried he—"quick—I must be in time for the three o'clock train to London."

And thus terminated the result of the great barrister's first instructions to his eminent solicitor to discover a lame man and a little girl. No inquiry, on the whole, could have been more skillfully conducted. Mr. Gotobed sends his head clerk—the head clerk employs the policeman of the village—gets upon the right track—comes to the right house—and is altogether in the wrong—in a manner highly creditable to his researches.

"In London, of course—all people of that kind come back to London," said Mr. Gotobed. "Give me the heads in writing, that I may report to my distinguished client. Most satisfactory. That young man will push his way—business-like and methodical."

CHAPTER VII.

The cloud has its silver lining.

Thus turning his back on the good fortune which he had so carefully cautioned Mrs. Saunders against favoring on his behalf, the vagrant was now on his way to the ancient municipal town of Gatesborough, which being the nearest place of fitting opulence and population, Mr. Waife had resolved to honor with the *début* of Sir Isaac as soon as he had appropriated to himself the services of that promising quadruped. He had consulted a map of the county before quitting Mr. Merle's roof, and ascertained that he could reach Gatesborough by a short cut for foot-travelers along fields and lanes. He was always glad to avoid the high-road: doubtless for such avoidance he had good reasons. But prudential reasons were in this instance supported by vagrant inclinations. High-roads are for the prosperous. By-paths and ill-luck go together. But by-paths have their charm, and ill-luck its pleasant moments.

They passed, then, from the high-road into a long succession of green pastures, through which a straight public path conducted them into one of those charming lanes never seen out of this bowery England—a lane deep sunk amidst high banks, with overhanging oaks, and quivering ash, gnarled witch-elm, vivid holly, and shaggy brambles, with wild convolvulus and creeping woodbine forcing sweet life through all. Sometimes the banks opened abruptly, leaving patches of greensward, and peeps through still sequestered gates, or over moss-grown pales, into the park or paddock of some rural thane. New villas or old manor-houses on lawny uplands, knitting, as it were, together, England's feudal memories with England's free-born hopes—the old land with its young people; for England is so old, and the English are so young! And the gray cripple and the bright-haired child often paused, and gazed upon the demesnes and homes of owners whose lots were cast in such pleasant places. But there was no grudging envy in their gaze; perhaps because their life was too remote from those grand belongings. And therefore they could enjoy and possess every banquet of the eye. For at least the beauty of what we see is ours for the moment, on the simple condition that we do not covet the thing which gives to our eyes that beauty. As the measureless sky and the unnumbered stars are equally granted to king and to beggar—and in our wildest ambition we do not sigh for a monopoly of the empyrean, or the fee-simple of the planets—so the earth too, with all its fenced gardens and embattled walls—all its landmarks of stern property and churlish ownership—is ours too by right of eye. Ours to gaze on the fair possessions with such delight as the gaze can give; grudging to the unseen owner his other, and it may be more troubled rights, as little as we grudge an astral proprietor his acres of light in Capricorn. Benignant is the law that saith, "*Thou shalt not covet.*"

When the sun was at the highest, our wayfarers found a shadowy nook for their rest and repast. Before them ran a shallow limpid trout-stream; on the other side its margin, low grassy meadows, a farm-house at the distance, backed by a still grove, from which rose a still church-tower and its still spire. Behind them a close-shaven sloping lawn terminated the hedgerow of the lane; seen clearly above it, with parterres of flowers on the sward—drooping lilacs and laburnums farther back, and a pervading fragrance from the brief-lived and rich syringas. The cripple had climbed over a wooden rail that separated the lane from the rill, and seated himself under the shade of a fantastic hollow thorn-tree. Sophy, reclined beside him, was gathering some pale scentless violets from a mound which the brambles had guarded from the sun. The dog had descended to the waters to quench his thirst; but still stood knee-deep in the shallow stream, and appeared lost in philosophical contemplation of a swarm of minnows which his immersion had disturbed; but which now made itself again visible on the further side of the glassy brook, undulating round and round a tiny rocklet which interrupted the glide of the waves, and caused them to break into a low melodious murmur. "For these and all thy mercies, O Lord, make us thankful," said the Victim of Ill-luck, in the tritest words of a pious custom. But never, perhaps, at aldermanic feasts, was the grace more sincerely said.

And then he untied the bundle, which the dog, who had hitherto carried it by the way, had now carefully deposited at his side. "As I live," ejaculated Waife, "Mrs. Saunders is a woman in ten thousand. See, Sophy, not contented with the bread and cheese to which I bade her stint her beneficence, a whole chicken—a little cake too for you, Sophy; she has not even forgotten the salt. Sophy, that woman deserves the handsomest token of our gratitude; and we will present her with a silver tea-pot the first moment we can afford it."

His spirits exhilarated by the unexpected good cheer, the Comedian gave way to his naturally blithe humor; and between every mouthful he rattled or rather drolled on, now infant-like, now sage-like. He cast out the rays of his liberal humor, careless where they fell—on the child—on the dog—on the fishes that played beneath the wave—on the cricket that chirped amidst the grass: the woodpecker tapped the tree, and the cripple's merry voice answered it in bird-like mimicry. To this riot of genial babble there was a listener, of whom neither grandfather nor grandchild was aware. Concealed by thick brushwood a few paces farther on, a young angler, who might be five or six and twenty, had seated himself, just before the arrival of our vagrant to those banks and waters, for the purpose of changing an unsuccessful fly. At the sound of voices, perhaps suspecting an unlicensed rival—for that part of the stream was preserved—he had suspended his task, and noiselessly put aside the clustering leaves to reconnoitre. The piety of Waife's simple grace seemed to surprise him pleasingly, for a sweet approving smile crossed his lips. He continued to look and to listen. He forgot the fly, and a trout sailed him by unheeded. But Sir Isaac, having probably satisfied his speculative mind as to the natural attributes of minnows, now slowly reascended the bank, and after a brief halt and a sniff, walked majestically toward the hidden observer, looked at him with great solemnity, and uttered an inquisitive bark—a bark not hostile, not menacing; purely and dryly interrogative. Thus detected, the angler rose; and Waife, whose attention was attracted that way by the bark, saw him, called to Sir Isaac, and said politely, "There is no harm in my dog, Sir."

The young man muttered some inaudible reply, and, lifting up his rod, as in sign of his occupation or excuse for his vicinity, put aside the intervening foliage, and stepped quietly to Waife's side. Sir Isaac followed him—sniffed again—seemed satisfied; and, seating himself on his haunches, fixed his attention upon the remains of the chicken which lay defenseless on the grass. The new-comer was evidently of the rank of gentleman; his figure was slim and graceful, his face pale, meditative, refined. He would have impressed you at once with the idea of what he really was—an Oxford scholar; and you would, perhaps, have guessed him designed for the ministry of the Church, if not actually in orders.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Waife excites the admiration, and benignly pities the infirmity of an Oxford scholar.

"You are str—str—strangers?" said the Oxonian, after a violent exertion to express himself, caused by an impediment in his speech.

Waife. "Yes, Sir, travelers. I trust we are not trespassing: this is not private ground, I think?"

Oxonian. "And if—f—f—f it were, my f—f—father would not war—n—n you off—ff—f."

"It is your father's ground then? Sir, I beg you a thousand pardons."

The apology was made in the Comedian's grandest style—it imposed greatly on the young scholar. Waife might have been a duke in disguise; but I will do the angler the justice to say that such discovery of rank would have impressed him little more in the vagrant's favor. It had been that impromptu "grace"—that thanksgiving which the scholar felt was for something more than the carnal food—which had first commanded his respect and wakened his interest. Then that innocent, careless talk, part uttered to dog and child—part soliloquized—part thrown out to the ears of the lively teeming Nature, had touched a somewhat kindred chord in the angler's soul, for he was somewhat of a poet and much of a soliloquist, and could confer with Nature, nor feel that impediment in speech which obstructed his intercourse with men. Having thus far indicated that oral defect in our new acquaintance, the reader will cheerfully excuse me for not enforcing it overmuch. Let it be among the things *sub audita*, as the sense of it gave to a gifted and aspiring nature, thwarted in the sublime career of preacher, an exquisite mournful pain. And I no more like to raise a laugh at his infirmity behind his back, than I should before his pale, powerful, melancholy face—therefore I suppress the infirmity in giving his reply.

Oxonian. "On the other side the lane where the garden slopes downward is my father's house. This ground is his property certainly, but he puts it to its best use, in lending it to those who so piously acknowledge that Father from whom all good comes. Your child, I presume, Sir?"

"My grandchild."

"She seems delicate; I hope you have not far to go?"

"Not very far, thank you, Sir. But my little girl looks more delicate than she is. You are not tired, darling?"

"Oh, not at all!" There was no mistaking the looks of real love interchanged between the old man and the child: the scholar felt much interested and somewhat puzzled. "Who and what could they be? so unlike foot wayfarers!" On the other hand, too, Waife took a liking to the courteous young man, and conceived a sincere pity for his physical affliction. But he did not for those reasons depart from the discreet caution he had prescribed to himself in seeking new fortunes and shunning old perils, so he turned the subject.

"You are an angler, Sir? I suppose the trout in this stream run small."

"Not very—a little higher up I have caught them at four pounds weight."

Waife. "There goes a fine fish yonder—see! balancing himself between those weeds."

Oxonian. "Poor fellow, let him be safe today. After all, it is a cruel sport, and I should break myself of it. But it is strange that whatever our love for Nature, we always seek some excuse for trusting ourselves alone to her. A gun—a rod—a sketch-book—a geologist's hammer—an entomologist's net—something."

Waife. "Is it not because all our ideas would run wild if not concentrated on a definite pursuit? Fortune and Nature are earnest females, though popular beauties; and they do not look upon coquettish triflers in the light of genuine wooers."

The Oxonian who, in venting his previous remark, had thought it likely he should be above his listener's comprehension, looked surprised. What pursuits, too, had this one-eyed philosopher!

"You have a definite pursuit, Sir?"

"I—alas—when a man moralizes, it is a sign that he has known error: it is because I have been a trifler that I rail against triflers. And talking of that, time flies, and we must be off and away."

Sophy retied the bundle. Sir Isaac, on whom, meanwhile, she had bestowed the remains of the chicken, jumped up and described a circle.

"I wish you success in your pursuit, whatever it be," stuttered out the angler.

"And I no less heartily, Sir, wish you success in yours."

"Mine! Success there is beyond my power."

"How, Sir? Does it rest so much with others?"

"No, my failure is in myself. My career should be the Church, my pursuit the cure of souls, and—and—this pitiful infirmity! How can I speak the Divine Word—I—I—a stutterer!"

The young man did not pause for an answer, but plunged through the brushwood that bespread the banks of the rill, and his hurried path could be traced by the wave of the foliage through which he forced his way.

"We all have our burdens," said Gentleman Waife, as Sir Isaac took up the bundle, and stalked on, placid and refreshed.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nomad, entering into civilized life, adopts its arts, shaves his poodle, and puts on a black coat. Hints at the process by which a Cast-off exalts himself into a Take-in.

At twilight they stopped at a quiet inn within eight miles of Gatesboro'. Sophy, much tired, was glad to creep to bed. Waife sat up long after her; and, in preparation for the eventful morrow, washed and shaved Sir Isaac. You would not have known the dog again; he was dazzling. Not Ulysses, rejuvenated by Pallas Athenè, could have been more changed for the better. His flanks revealed a skin most daintily mottled; his tail became leonine with an imperial tuft; his mane fell in long curls, like the beard of a Ninevite king; his boots were those of a courtier in the reign of Charles II.; his eyes looked forth in dark splendor from locks white as the driven snow. This feat performed,

Waife slept the peace of the righteous, and Sir Isaac stretched on the floor beside the bed, licked his mottled flanks and shivered—"*Il faut souffrir pour être beau.*" Much marveling, Sophy the next morn beheld the dog; but before she was up Waife had paid the bill and was waiting for her on the road, impatient to start. He did not heed her exclamations, half compassionate, half admiring; he was absorbed in thought. Thus they proceeded slowly on till within two miles of the town, and then Waife turned aside, entered a wood, and there, with the aid of Sophy, put the dog upon a deliberate rehearsal of the anticipated drama. The dog was not in good spirits, but he went through his part with mechanical accuracy, though slight enthusiasm.

"He is to be relied upon, in spite of his French origin," said Waife. "All national prejudice fades before the sense of a common interest. And we shall always find more general solidity of character in a French poodle than in an English mastiff, whenever a poodle is of use to us, and a mastiff is not. But oh, waste of care! oh sacrifice of time to empty names! oh emblem of fashionable education! It never struck me before—does it not, child though thou art, strike thee now—by the necessities of our drama, this animal must be a French dog?"

"Well, grandfather?"

"And we have given him an English name! Precious result of our own scholastic training; taught at preparatory academies precisely that which avails us naught when we are to face the world! What is to be done? Unlearn him his own cognomen—teach him another name; too late, too late! We can not afford the delay."

"I don't see why he should be called any name at all. He observes your signs just as well without."

"If I had but discovered that at the beginning. Pity! Such a fine name, too! Sir Isaac! *Vanitas, vanitatum!* What desire chiefly kindles the ambitious? To create a name—perhaps bequeath a title—exalt into Sir Isaacs a progeny of Mops! And after all, it is possible (let us hope it in this instance) that a sensible young dog may learn his letters and shoulder his musket just as well though all the appellations by which humanity knows him be condensed into a pitiful monosyllable. Nevertheless (as you will find when you are older), people are obliged in practice to renounce for themselves the application of those rules which they philosophically prescribe for others. Thus, while I grant that a change of name for *that* dog is a question belonging to the policy of Ifs and Buts, commonly called the policy of Expediency, about which one may differ with others and one's own self every quarter of an hour—a change of name for me belongs to the policy of Must and Shall, viz., the policy of Necessity, against which let no dog bark, though I have known dogs howl at it! William Waife is no more; he is dead—he is buried; and even Juliet Araminta is the baseless fabric of a vision."

Sophy raised inquiringly her blue, guileless eyes.

"You see before you a man who has used up the name of Waife, and who, on entering the town of Gatesboro', becomes a sober, staid, and respectable personage, under the appellation of Chapman. You are Miss Chapman. Rugge and his exhibition 'leave not a wrack behind.'"

Sophy smiled and then sighed—the smile for her grandfather's gay spirits; wherefore the sigh? Was it that some instinct in that fresh, loyal nature revolted from the thought of these *aliases*, which, if requisite for safety, were still akin to imposture. If so, poor child, she had much yet to set right with her conscience! All I can say is, that after she had smiled she sighed. And more reasonably might a reader ask his author to subject a zephyr to the microscope than a female's sigh to analysis.

"Take the dog with you, my dear, back into the lane; I will join you in a few minutes. You are neatly dressed, and if not, would look so. I, in this old coat, have the air of a peddler, so I will change it, and enter the town of Gatesboro' in the character of—a man whom you will soon see before you. Leave those things alone, de-Isaacized Sir Isaac! Follow your mistress—go"

Sophy left the wood, and walked on slowly toward the town, with her hand pensively resting on Sir Isaac's head. In less than ten minutes she was joined by Waife, attired in respectable black; his hat and shoes well brushed; a new green shade to his eye; and with his finest air of *Père Noble*. He was now in his favorite element. He was acting—call it not imposture. Was Lord Chatham an impostor when he draped his flannels into the folds of the toga, and arrayed the curls of his wig so as to add more sublime effect to the majesty of his brow and the terrors of its nod? And certainly, considering that Waife, after all, was but a professional vagabond—considering all the turns and shifts to which he has been put for bread and salt—the wonder is, not that he is full of stage tricks and small deceptions, but that he has contrived to retain at heart so much childish simplicity. When a man for a series of years has only had his wits to live by, I say not that he is necessarily a rogue—he may be a good fellow; but you can scarcely expect his code of honor to be precisely the same as Sir Philip Sidney's. Homer expresses, through the lips of Achilles, that sublime love of truth, which, even in those remote times, was the becoming characteristic of a gentleman and a soldier. But, then, Achilles is well off during his whole life, which, though distinguished, is short. On the other hand, Ulysses, who is sorely put to it, kept out of his property in Ithaca, and, in short, living on his wits, is not the less befriended by the immaculate Pallas, because his wisdom savors somewhat of stage trick and sharp practice. And as to convenient *aliases* and white fibs, where would have been the use of his wits, if Ulysses had disdained such arts, and been magnanimously munched up by Polyphemus? Having thus touched on the epic side of Mr. Waife's character with the clemency due to human nature, but with the caution required by the interests of society, permit him to resume a "duplex course," sanctioned by ancient precedent, but not commended to modern imitation. Just as our travelers neared the town, the screech of a railway whistle resounded toward their right—a long train rushed from the jaws of a tunnel, and shot into the neighboring station.

"How lucky!" exclaimed Waife; "make

haste, my dear!" Was he going to take the train? Pshaw! he was at his journey's end. He was going to mix with the throng that would soon stream through those white gates into the town; he was going to purloin the respectable appearance of a passenger by the train. And so well did he act the part of a bewildered stranger just vomited forth into unfamiliar places by one of those panting steam monsters, so artfully amidst the busy competition of nudging elbows, overbearing shoulders, and the *impedimenta* of carpet-bags, portmanteaus, babies in arms, and shin-assailing trucks, did he look round consequentially on the *qui vive*, turning his one eye now on Sophy, now on Sir Isaac, and griping his bundle to his breast as if he suspected all his neighbors to be Thugs, condottieri, and swell-mob, that in an instant fly-men, omnibus-drivers, cads, and porters, marked him for their own. "Gatesboro' Arms," "Spread Eagle," "Royal Hotel," "Saracen's Head,"—very comfortable, centre of High Street, opposite the "Town Hall,"—were shouted, bawled, whispered, or whined into his ear. "*Is* there an honest porter?" asked the Comedian, piteously. An Irishman presented himself. "And is it meself can serve your honor?"—"Take this bundle, and walk on before me to the High Street."—"Could not I take the bundle, grandfather? The man will charge so much," said the prudent Sophy. "Hush! you indeed!" said the *Père Noble*, as if addressing an exiled *Altesse royale*—"you take a bundle—Miss—Chapman!"

They soon gained the High Street. Waife examined the fronts of the various inns which they passed by, with an eye accustomed to decipher the physiognomy of hostelries. "The Saracen's Head" pleased him, though its imposing size daunted Sophy. He arrested the steps of the porter, "Follow me close," and stepped across the open threshold into the bar. The landlady herself was there, portly and imposing, with an auburn *toupet*, a silk gown, a cameo brooch, and an ample bosom.

"You have a private sitting-room, ma'am?" said the Comedian, lifting his hat. There are so many ways of lifting a hat—for instance, the way for which Louis XIV. was so renowned. But the Comedian's way on the present occasion rather resembled that of the late Duke of Beaufort—not quite royal, but as near to royalty as becomes a subject. He added, re-covering his head—"And on the first floor?" The landlady did not courtesy, but she bowed, emerged from the bar, and set foot on the broad stairs; then, looking back graciously, her eyes rested on Sir Isaac, who had stalked forth in advance, and with expansive nostrils sniffed. She hesitated. "Your dog, Sir! shall boots take it round to the stables?"

"The stables, ma'am—the stables, my dear," turning to Sophy, with a smile more ducal than the previous bow; "what would they say at home if they heard that noble animal was consigned to—stables? Ma'am, my dog is my companion, and as much accustomed to drawing-rooms as I am myself." Still the landlady paused. The dog might be accustomed to drawing-rooms, but her drawing-room was not accustomed to dogs. She had just laid down a new carpet. And such are the strange and erratic affinities in nature—such are the incongruous concatenations in the cross-stitch of ideas, that there are associations between dogs and carpets, which, if wrongful to the owners of dogs, beget no unreasonable apprehensions in the proprietors of carpets. So there stood the landlady, and there stood the dog! and there they might be standing to this day had not the Comedian dissolved the spell. "Take up my effects again," said he, turning to the porter; "doubtless they are more habituated to distinguish between dog and dog at the Royal Hotel."

The landlady was mollified in a moment. Nor was it only the rivalries that necessarily existed between the Saracen's Head and the Royal Hotel that had due weight with her. A gentleman who could not himself deign to carry even that small bundle, must be indeed a gentleman! Had he come with a portmanteau—even with a carpet-bag—the porter's service would have been no evidence of rank, but, accustomed as she was chiefly to gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits, it was new to her experience a gentleman with effects so light and hands so aristocratically helpless. Herein were equally betokened the two attributes of birth and wealth—viz., the habit of command, and the disdain of shillings. A vague remembrance of the well-known story how a man and his dog had arrived at the Granby Hotel, at Harrogate, and been sent away roomless to the other and less patrician establishment, because, while he had a dog, he had not a servant; when, five minutes after such dismissal, came carriages and lackeys, and an imperious valet, asking for his grace the Duke of A——, who had walked on before with his dog, and who, oh everlasting thought of remorse! had been sent away to bring the other establishment into fashion!—a vague reminiscence of that story, I say, flashed upon the landlady's mind, and she exclaimed, "I only thought, Sir, you might prefer the stables; of course, it is as you please—this way, Sir. He is a fine animal, indeed, and seems mild."

"You may bring up the bundle, porter," quoth the *Père Noble*. "Take my arm, my dear; these steps are very steep."

The landlady threw open the door of a handsome sitting-room—her best: she pulled down the blinds to shut out the glare of the sun, then, retreating to the threshold, awaited further orders.

"Rest yourself, my dear," said the Actor, placing Sophy on a couch with that tender respect for sex and childhood which so especially belongs to the high-bred. "The room will do, ma'am. I will let you know later whether we shall require beds. As to dinner, I am not particular—a cutlet—a chicken—what you please—at seven o'clock. Stay, I beg your pardon for detaining you; but where does the Mayor live?"

"His private residence is a mile out of the town; but his counting-house is just above the Town Hall—to the right, Sir!"

"Name?"

"Mr. Hartopp!"

"Hartopp! Ah! to be sure, Hartopp. His political opinions, I think are (ventures at a guess) enlightened!"

LANDLADY. "Very much so, Sir. Mr. Hartopp is highly respected."

Waife. "The chief municipal officer of a town so thriving—fine shops and much plate-glass—must march with the times. I think I have heard that Mr. Hartopp promotes the spread of intelligence and the propagation of knowledge."

Landlady (rather puzzled). "I dare say, Sir. The Mayor takes great interest in the Gatesboro' Athenæum and Literary Institute."

Waife. "Exactly what I should have presumed from his character and station. I will detain you no longer, ma'am" (Duke of Beaufort bow). The landlady descended the stairs. Was her guest a candidate for the representation of the town at the next election? March with the times—spread of intelligence! All candidates she ever knew had that way of expressing themselves—"March" and "Spread." Not an address had parliamentary aspirant put forth to the freemen and electors of Gatesboro', but what "March" had been introduced by the candidate, and "Spread" been suggested by the committee. Still she thought that her guest, upon the whole, looked and bowed more like a member of the Upper House. Perhaps one of the amiable though occasionally prosy peers who devote the teeth of wisdom to the cracking of those very hard nuts—"How to educate the masses," "What to do with our criminals," and such like problems, upon which already have been broken so many jawbones tough as that with which Samson slew the Philistines.

"Oh, grandfather," sighed Sophy, "what are you about? We shall be ruined—you too, who are so careful not to get into debt. And what have we left to pay the people here?"

"Sir Isaac! and this!" returned the Comedian, touching his forehead. "Do not alarm yourself—stay here and repose—and don't let Sir Isaac out of the room on any account!"

He took off his hat, brushed the nap carefully with his sleeve, replaced it on his head—not jauntily aside—not like a *jeune premier*, but with equilateral brims, and in composed fashion, like a *père noble*—then, making a sign to Sir Isaac to rest quiet, he passed to the door; there he halted, and turning toward Sophy, and meeting her wistful eyes, his own eye moistened. "Ah!" he murmured, "Heaven grant I may succeed now, for if I do, then you shall indeed be a little lady!"

He was gone.

CHAPTER X.

Showing with what success Gentleman Waife assumes the pleasing part of Friend to the Enlightenment of the Age and the Progress of the People.

On the landing-place Waife encountered the Irish porter, who, having left the bundle in the drawing-room, was waiting patiently to be paid for his trouble.

The Comedian surveyed the good-humored, shrewd face, on every line of which was writ the golden maxim, "Take things asy." "I beg your pardon, my friend; I had almost forgotten you. Have you been long in this town?"

"Four years—and long life to your honor!"

"Do you know Mr. Hartopp, the Mayor?"

"Is it his worship the Mayor? Sure and it is the Mayor as has made a man o' Mike Callaghan."

The Comedian evinced urbane curiosity to learn the history of that process, and drew forth a grateful tale. Four summers ago Mike had resigned the "first gem of the sea" in order to assist in making hay for a Saxon taskmaker. Mr. Hartopp, who farmed largely, had employed him in that rural occupation. Seized by a malignant fever, Mr. Hartopp had helped him through it, and naturally conceived a liking for the man he helped. Thus, as Mike became convalescent, instead of passing the poor man back to his own country, which at that time gave little employment to the surplus of its agrarian population beyond an occasional shot at a parson, an employment, though animated, not lucrative, exercised Mike's returning strength upon a few light jobs in his warehouse; and, finally, Mike marrying imprudently the daughter of a Gatesboro' operative, Mr. Hartopp set him up in life as a professional messenger and porter, patronized by the corporation. The narrative made it evident that Mr. Hartopp was a kind and worthy man, and the Comedian's heart warmed toward him.

"An honor to our species, this Mr. Hartopp!" said Waife, striking his staff upon the floor; "I covet his acquaintance. Would he see you if you called at his counting-house?"

Mike replied in the affirmative, with eager pride, "Mr. Hartopp would see him at once. Sure, did not the Mayor know that time was money? Mr. Hartopp was not a man to keep the poor waiting."

"Go down and stay outside the hall door; you shall take a note for me to the Mayor."

Waife then passed into the bar, and begged the favor of a sheet of note-paper. The landlady seated him at her own desk, and thus wrote the Comedian:

"Mr. Chapman presents his compliments to the Mayor of Gatesboro', and requests the honor of a very short interview. Mr. Chapman's deep interest in the permanent success of those literary institutes which are so distinguished a feature of this enlightened age, and Mr. Mayor's well-known zeal in the promotion of those invaluable societies, must be Mr. Chapman's excuse for the liberty he ventures to take in this request. Mr. C. may add that of late he has earnestly directed his attention to the best means of extracting new uses from those noble but undeveloped institutions.—*Saracen's Head*, etc."

This epistle, duly sealed and addressed, Waife delivered to the care of Mike Callaghan—and simultaneously he astounded that functionary with no less a gratuity than half a crown. Cutting short the fervent blessings which this generous donation naturally called forth, the Comedian said, with his happiest combination of suavity and loftiness, "And should the Mayor ask you what sort of person I am—for I have not the honor to be known to him, and there are so many adventurers about, that he might reasonably expect me to be one—perhaps you can say that I don't look like a person he need be afraid to admit. You know a gentleman by sight! Bring back an answer as soon as may be; perhaps I shan't stay long in the town. You will find me in the High Street, looking at the shops."

The porter took to his legs—impatient to vent his overflowing heart upon the praises of this munificent stranger. A gentleman, indeed—Mike should think so. If Mike's good word with the Mayor was worth money, Gentleman Waife had put his half-crown out upon famous interest.

The Comedian strolled along the High Street, and stopped before a stationer's shop, at the window of which was displayed a bill, entitled,

GATESBORO' ATHENÆUM AND LITERARY INSTITUTE.

LECTURE ON CONCHOLOGY,

By Professor Long,

Author of "Researches into the Natural History of Limpets."

Waife entered the shop, and lifted his hat—"Permit me, Sir, to look at that hand-bill."

"Certainly, Sir; but the lecture is over—you can see by the date; it came off last week. We allow the bills of previous proceedings at our Athenæum to be exposed at the window till the new bills are prepared—keeps the whole thing alive, Sir."

"Conchology," said the Comedian, "is a subject which requires deep research, and on which a learned man may say much without fear of contradiction. But how far is Gatesboro' from the British Ocean?"

"I don't know exactly, Sir—a long way."

"Then, as shells are not familiar to the youthful remembrances of your fellow-townsmen, possibly the lecturer may have found an audience rather select than numerous."

"It was a very attentive audience, Sir—and highly respectable—Miss Grieve's young ladies (the genteelest seminary in the town) attended."

Waife. "Highly creditable to the young ladies. But, pardon me, is your Athenæum a *Mechanics'* Institute?"

Shopman. "It was so called at first. But, somehow or other, the mere operatives fell off, and it was thought advisable to change the word 'Mechanics' into the word 'Literary.' Gatesboro' is not a manufacturing town, and the mechanics here do not realize the expectations of that taste for abstract science on which the originators of these societies founded their—"

Waife (insinuatingly interrupting). "Their calculations of intellectual progress and their tables of pecuniary return. Few of these societies, I am told, are really self-supporting—I suppose Professor Long is!—and if he resides in Gatesboro', and writes on limpets, he is probably a man of independent fortune."

Shopman. "Why, Sir, the Professor was engaged from London—five guineas and his traveling expenses. The funds of the society could ill afford such outlay: but we have a most worthy Mayor, who, assisted by his foreman, Mr. Williams, our treasurer, is, I may say, the life and soul of the institute."

"A literary man himself, your Mayor?"

The shopman smiled. "Not much in that way, Sir; but any thing to enlighten the working classes. This is Professor Long's great work upon limpets, 2 vols. post octavo. The Mayor has just presented it to the library of the Institute. I was cutting the leaves when you came in."

"Very prudent in you, Sir. If limpets were but able to read printed character in the English tongue, this work would have more interest for them than the ablest investigations upon the political and social condition of man. But," added the Comedian, shaking his head mournfully, "the human species is not testaceous—and what the history of man might be to a limpet, the history of limpets is to a man." So saying, Mr. Waife bought a sheet of card-board and some gilt-foil, relifted his hat, and walked out.

The shopman scratched his head thoughtfully; he glanced from his window at the form of the receding stranger, and mechanically resumed the task of cutting those leaves, which, had the volumes reached the shelves of the library uncut, would have so remained to the crack of doom.

Mike Callaghan now came in sight, striding fast. "Mr. Mayor sends his love—bother-o'-me—his respex; and will be happy to see your honor."

In three minutes more the Comedian was seated in a little parlor that adjoined Mr. Hartopp's counting-house—Mr. Hartopp seated also, *vis-à-vis*. The Mayor had one of those countenances upon which good-nature throws a sunshine softer than Claude ever shed upon canvas. Josiah Hartopp had risen in life by little other art than that of quiet kindliness. As a boy at school, he had been ever ready to do a good turn to his school-fellows; and his school-fellows at last formed themselves into a kind of police, for the purpose of protecting Jos. Hartopp's pence and person from the fists and fingers of each other. He was evidently so anxious to please his master, not from fear of the rod, but the desire to spare that worthy man the pain of inflicting it, that he had more trouble taken with his education than was bestowed on the brightest intellect that school ever reared; and where other boys were roughly flogged, Jos. Hartopp was soothingly patted on the head, and told not to be cast down, but try again. The same even-handed justice returned the sugared chalice to his lips in his apprenticeship to an austere leather-seller, who, not bearing the thought to lose sight of so mild a face, raised him into partnership, and ultimately made him his son-in-law and residuary legatee. Then Mr. Hartopp yielded to the advice of friends who desired his exaltation, and from a leather-seller became a tanner. Hides themselves softened their asperity to that gentle dealer, and melted into golden fleeces. He became rich enough to hire a farm for health and recreation. He knew little of husbandry, but he won the heart of a bailiff who might have reared a turnip from a deal table. Gradually the farm became his fee-simple, and the farm-house expanded into a villa. Wealth and honors flowed in from a brimmed horn. The surliest man in the town would have been ashamed of saying a rude thing to Jos. Hartopp. If he spoke in public, though he hummed and hawed lamentably, no one was so respectfully listened to. As for the parliamentary representation of the town he could have returned himself for one seat and Mike Callaghan for the other, had he been so disposed. But he was too full of the milk of humanity to admit into his veins a drop from the gall of party. He suffered others to legislate for his native land, and (except on one occasion, when he had been

persuaded to assist in canvassing not indeed the electors of Gatesboro' but those of a distant town in which he possessed some influence, on behalf of a certain eminent orator), Jos. Hartopp was only visible in politics whenever Parliament was to be petitioned in favor of some humane measure, or against a tax that would have harassed the poor.

If any thing went wrong with him in his business, the whole town combined to set it right for him. Was a child born to him, Gatesboro' rejoiced as a mother. Did measles or scarlatina afflict his neighborhood, the first anxiety of Gatesboro' was for Mr. Hartopp's nursery. No one would have said Mrs. Hartopp's nursery; and when in such a department the man's name supersedes the woman's, can more be said in proof of the tenderness he excites? In short, Jos. Hartopp was a notable instance of a truth not commonly recognized, viz., that affection is power, and that, if you do make it thoroughly and unequivocally clear that you love your neighbors, though it may not be quite so well as you love yourself—still, cordially and disinterestedly, you will find your neighbors much better fellows than Mrs. Grundy gives them credit for—but always provided that your talents be not such as to excite their envy, nor your opinions such as to offend their prejudices.

Mr. Hartopp. "You take an interest, you say, in literary institutes, and have studied the subject?"

The Comedian. "Of late, those institutes have occupied my thoughts as presenting the readiest means of collecting liberal ideas into a profitable focus."

Mr. Hartopp. "Certainly it is a great thing to bring classes together in friendly union."

The Comedian. "For laudable objects."

Mr. Hartopp. "To cultivate their understandings."

The Comedian. "To warm their hearts."

Mr. Hartopp. "To give them useful knowledge."

The Comedian. "And pleasurable sensations."

Mr. Hartopp. "In a word, to instruct them."

The Comedian. "And to amuse."

"Eh!" said the Mayor—"amuse!"

Now, every one about the person of this amiable man was on the constant guard to save him from the injurious effects of his own benevolence; and accordingly his foreman, hearing that he was closeted with a stranger, took alarm, and entered on pretense of asking instructions about an order for hides—in reality, to glower upon the intruder, and keep his master's hands out of imprudent pockets.

Mr. Hartopp, who, though not brilliant, did not want for sense, and was a keener observer than was generally supposed, divined the kindly intentions of his assistant. "A gentleman interested in the Gatesboro' Athenæum. My foreman, Sir—Mr. Williams, the treasurer of our Institute. Take a chair, Williams."

"You said to amuse, Mr. Chapman, but—"

"You did not find Professor Long on conchology amusing?"

"Why," said the Mayor, smiling blandly, "I myself am not a man of science, and therefore his lecture though profound, was a little dry to me."

"Must it not have been still more dry to your workmen, Mr. Mayor?"

"They did not attend," said Williams. "Uphill task we have to secure the Gatesboro' mechanics, when any thing really solid is to be addressed to their understandings."

"Poor things, they are so tired at night," said the Mayor, compassionately; "but they wish to improve themselves, and they take books from the library."

"Novels," quoth the stern Williams—"it will be long before they take out that valuable 'History of Limpets.'"

"If a lecture was as amusing as a novel, would not they attend it?" asked the Comedian.

"I suppose they would," returned Mr. Williams. "But our object is to instruct; and instruction, Sir—"

"Could be made amusing. If, for instance, the lecturer could produce a live shell-fish, and by showing what kindness can do toward developing intellect and affection in beings without soul, make man himself more kind to his fellowman?"

Mr. Williams laughed grimly. "Well, Sir."

"This is what I should propose to do."

"With a shell-fish!" cried the Mayor.

"No, Sir; with a creature of nobler attributes —A DOG!"

The listeners stared at each other like dumb animals as Waife continued:

"By winning interest for the individuality of a gifted quadruped, I should gradually create interest in the natural history of its species. I should lead the audience on to listen to comparisons with other members of the great family which once associated with Adam. I should lay the foundation for an instructive course of natural history, and from vertebrated mammifers who knows but we might gradually arrive at the nervous system of the molluscous division, and produce a sensation by the production of a limpet!"

"Theoretical," said Mr. Williams.

"Practical, Sir; since I take it for granted that the Athenæum, at present, is rather a tax upon the richer subscribers, including Mr. Mayor."

"Nothing to speak of," said the mild Hartopp. Williams looked toward his master with unspeakable love, and groaned. "Nothing indeed —oh!"

"These societies should be wholly self-supporting," said the Comedian, "and inflict no pecuniary loss upon Mr. Mayor."

"Certainly," said Williams, "that is the right principle. Mr. Mayor should be protected."

"And if I show you how to make these societies self-supporting—"

"We should be very much obliged to you."

"I propose, then, to give an exhibition at your rooms."

Mr. Williams nudged the Mayor, and coughed, the Comedian not appearing to remark cough or nudge.

"Of course gratuitously. I am not a professional lecturer, gentlemen."

Mr. Williams looked charmed to hear it.

"And when I have made my first effort successful, as I feel sure it will be, I will leave it to you, gentlemen, to continue my undertaking.

But I can not stay long here. If the day after to-morrow—"

"That is our ordinary *soirée* night," said the Mayor. "But you said a dog, Sir—dogs not admitted—Eh, Williams?"

Mr. Williams. "A mere by-law, which the sub-committee can suspend if necessary. But would not the introduction of a live animal be less dignified than—"

"A dead failure," put in the Comedian, gravely. The Mayor would have smiled, but he was afraid of doing so lest it might hurt the feelings of Mr. Williams, who did not seem to take the joke.

"We are a purely intellectual body," said that latter gentleman, "and a dog—"

"A learned dog, I presume?" observed the Mayor.

Mr. Williams (nodding). "Might form a dangerous precedent for the introduction of other quadrupeds. We might thus descend even to the level of a learned pig. We are not a menagerie, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Chapman," said the Mayor, urbanely.

"Enough," said the Comedian, rising, with his grand air: "if I considered myself at liberty, gentlemen, to say who and what I am, you would be sure that I am not trifling with what *I* consider a very grave and important subject. As to suggesting any thing derogatory to the dignity of science, and the eminent repute of the Gatesboro' Athenæum, it would be idle to vindicate myself. These gray hairs are—"

He did not conclude that sentence, save by a slight wave of the hand. The two burgesses bowed reverentially, and the Comedian went on:

"But when you speak of precedent, Mr. Williams, allow me to refer you to precedents in point. Aristotle wrote to Alexander the Great for animals to exhibit to the Literary Institute of Athens. At the colleges in Egypt lectures were delivered on a dog called Anubis, as inferior, I boldly assert, to that dog which I have referred to, as an Egyptian College to a British Institute. The ancient Etrurians, as is shown by the erudite Schweighæuser, in that passage —you understand Greek, I presume, Mr. Williams?"

Mr. Williams could not say he did.

The Comedian. "Then I will not quote that passage in Schweighæuser upon the Molossian dogs in general, and the dog of Alcibiades in particular. But it proves beyond a doubt that, in every ancient literary institute, learned dogs were highly estimated; and there was even a philosophical academy called the Cynic—that is, Doggish, or Dog-school, of which Diogenes was the most eminent professor. He, you know, went about with a lantern looking for an honest man, and could not find one! Why? Because the Society of Dogs had raised his standard of human honesty to an impracticable height. But I weary you; otherwise I could lecture on in this way for the hour together, if you think the Gatesboro' operatives prefer erudition to amusement."

"A great scholar," whispered Mr. Williams aloud. "And I've nothing to say against your precedents, Sir. I think you have made out that part of the case. But, after all, a learned dog is not so very uncommon as to be in itself the striking attraction which you appear to suppose."

"It is not the mere learning of my dog of which I boast," replied the Comedian. "Dogs may be learned, and men too; but it is the way that learning is imparted, whether by dog or man, for the edification of the masses, in order, as Pope expresses himself, 'to raise the genius and to mend the heart,' that alone adorns the possessor, exalts the species, interests the public, and commands the respect of such judges as I see before me." The grand bow.

"Ah!" said Mr. Williams, hesitatingly, "sentiments that do honor to your head and heart; and if we could, in the first instance, just see the dog privately."

"Nothing easier!" said the Comedian. "Will you do me the honor to meet him at tea this evening?"

"Rather will you not come and take tea at my house?" said the Mayor, with a shy glance toward Mr. Williams.

The Comedian. "You are very kind; but my time is so occupied that I have long since made it a rule to decline all private invitations out of my own home. At my years, Mr. Mayor, one may be excused for taking leave of society and its forms; but you are comparatively young men. I presume on the authority of these gray hairs, and I shall expect you this evening—say at nine o'clock." The Actor waved his hand graciously and withdrew.

"A scholar and a gentleman," said Williams, emphatically. And the Mayor, thus authorized to allow vent to his kindly heart, added, "A humorist, and a pleasant one. Perhaps he is right, and our poor operatives would thank us more for a little innocent amusement than for those lectures, which they may be excused for thinking rather dull, since even you fell asleep when Professor Long got into the multilocular shell of the very first class of cephalous mollusca; and it is my belief that harmless laughter has a moral effect upon the working class—only don't spread it about that I said so, for we know excellent persons of a serious turn of mind, whose opinions that sentiment might shock."

CHAPTER XI.

Historical Problem. "Is Gentleman Waife a swindler or a man of genius?" Answer—"Certainly a swindler, if he don't succeed." Julius Cæsar owed two millions when he risked the experiment of being general in Gaul. If Julius Cæsar had not lived to cross the Rubicon and pay off his debts, what would his creditors have called Julius Cæsar?

I need not say that Mr. Hartopp and his foreman came duly to tea, but the Comedian exhibited Sir Isaac's talents very sparingly—just enough to excite admiration without sating curiosity. Sophy, whose pretty face and well-bred air were not unappreciated, was dismissed early to bed by a sign from her grandfather, and the Comedian then exerted his powers to entertain his visitors, so that even Sir Isaac was soon forgotten. Hard task, by writing, to convey a fair idea of this singular vagrant's pleasant vein. It was not so much what he said as the way of saying it, which gave to his desultory talk the charm of humor. He had certainly seen an immense

deal of life somehow or other; and without appearing at the time to profit much by observation, without perhaps being himself conscious that he did profit, there was something in the very *enfantillage* of his loosest prattle, by which, with a glance of the one lustrous eye, and a twist of the mobile lip, he could convey the impression of an original genius playing with this round world of ours—tossing it up, catching it again—easily as a child plays with his party-colored ball. His mere book-knowledge was not much to boast of, though early in life he must have received a fair education. He had a smattering of the ancient classics, sufficient, perhaps, to startle the unlearned. If he had not read them, he had read about them; and at various odds and ends of his life he had picked up acquaintance with the popular standard modern writers. But literature with him was the smallest stripe in the party-colored ball. Still it was astonishing how far and wide the Comedian could spread the sands of lore that the winds had drifted round the door of his playful, busy intellect. Where, for instance, could he ever have studied the nature and prospects of Mechanics' Institutes? and yet how well he seemed to understand them. Here, perhaps, his experience in one kind of audience helped him to the key to all miscellaneous assemblages. In fine, the man was an actor; and if he had thought fit to act the part of Professor Long himself, he would have done it to the life.

The two burghers had not spent so pleasant an evening for many years. As the clock struck twelve, the Mayor, whose gig had been in waiting a whole hour to take him to his villa, rose reluctantly to depart.

"And," said Williams, "the bills must be out to-morrow. What shall we advertise?"

"The simpler the better," said Waife; "only pray head the performance with the assurance that it is under the special patronage of his worship the Mayor."

The Mayor felt his breast swell as if he had received some overwhelming personal obligation.

"Suppose it runs thus," continued the Comedian:

"Illustrations from Domestic Life and Natural History, with LIVE examples, PART FIRST—THE DOG!"

"It will take," said the Mayor; "dogs are such popular animals!"

"Yes," said Williams; "and though for that very reason some might think that by the 'live example of a dog' we compromised the dignity of the Institute—still the importance of Natural History—"

"And," added the Comedian, "the sanctifying influences of domestic life—"

"May," concluded Mr. Williams, "carry off whatever may seem to the higher order of minds a too familiar attraction in the—dog!"

"I do not fear the result," said Waife, "provided the audience be sufficiently numerous; for that (which is an indispensable condition to a fair experiment), I issue handbills—only where distributed by the Mayor."

"Don't be too sanguine. I distributed bills on behalf of Professor Long, and the audience was not numerous. However, I will do my best. Is there nothing more in which I can be of use to you, Mr. Chapman?"

"Yes, later." Williams took alarm and approached the Mayor's breast-pocket protectingly. The Comedian drew him aside and whispered, "I intend to give the Mayor a little outline of the exhibition, and bring him into it, in order that his fellow-townsmen may signify their regard for him by a cheer; it will please his good heart and be touching, you'll see—mum!" Williams shook the Comedian by the hand, relieved, affected, and confiding.

The visitors departed; and the Comedian lighted his hand-candlestick, whistled to Sir Isaac, and went to bed, without one compunctious thought upon the growth of his bill and the deficit in his pockets. And yet it was true, as Sophy implied, that the Comedian had an honest horror of incurring debt. He generally thought twice before he risked owing even the most trifling bill; and when the bill came in, if it left him penniless, it was paid. And now, what reckless extravagance! The best apartments! dinners—tea—in the first hotel of the town! half a crown to a porter! That lavish mode of life renewed with the dawning sun!—not a care for the morrow; and I dare not conjecture how few the shillings in that purse. What aggravation, too, of guilt! Bills incurred without means under a borrowed name! I don't pretend to be a lawyer; but it looks to me very much like swindling. Yet the wretch sleeps. But are we sure that we are not shallow moralists? Do we carry into account the right of genius to draw bills upon the Future? Does not the most prudent general sometimes burn his ships? Does not the most upright merchant sometimes take credit on the chance of his ventures? May not that peaceful slumberer be morally sure that he has that argosy afloat in his own head, which amply justifies his use of "the Saracen's?" If his plan should fail? He will tell you that is impossible! But if it *should* fail, you say. Listen; there runs a story—(I don't vouch for its truth. I tell it as it was told to me)—there runs a story, that in the late Russian war a certain naval veteran, renowned for professional daring and scientific invention, was examined before some great officials as to the chances of taking Cronstadt. "If you send *me*," said the admiral, "with so many ships-of-the-line, and so many gun-boats, Cronstadt, of course, will be taken." "But," said a prudent lord, "suppose it should not be taken?" "That is impossible—it must be taken!" "Yes," persisted my lord, "you think so, no doubt; but still, if it should not be taken—what then?" "What then!—why, there's an end of the British fleet!" The great men took alarm, and that admiral was not sent. But they misconstrued the meaning of his answer. He meant not to imply any considerable danger to the British fleet. He meant to prove that one hypothesis was impossible by the suggestion of a counter impossibility more self-evident. "It is impossible but what I shall take Cronstadt!" "But if you don't take it?" "It is impossible but what I shall take it; for if I don't take it, there's an end of the British fleet; and as it is impossible that there should be an end of the British fleet, it is impossible that I should not take Cronstadt!"—Q.E.D.

CHAPTER XII.

In which every thing depends on Sir Isaac's success in discovering the Law of Attraction.

On the appointed evening, at eight o'clock, the great room of the Gatesboro' Athenæum was unusually well filled. Not only had the Mayor exerted himself to the utmost for that object, but the handbill itself promised a rare relief from the prosiness of abstract enlightenment and elevated knowledge. Moreover, the stranger himself had begun to excite speculation and curiosity. He was an amateur, not a cut-and-dry professor. The Mayor and Mr. Williams had both spread the report that there was more in him than appeared on the surface: prodigiously learned, but extremely agreeable — fine manners, too! Who could he be? Was Chapman his real name? etc., etc.

The Comedian had obtained permission to arrange the room beforehand. He had the raised portion of it for his stage, and he had been fortunate enough to find a green curtain to be drawn across it. From behind this screen he now emerged, and bowed. The bow redoubled the first conventional applause. He then began a very short address — extremely well delivered, as you may suppose, but rather in the conversational than the oratorical style. He said it was his object to exhibit the intelligence of that Universal Friend of Man — the Dog — in some manner appropriate, not only to its sagacious instincts, but to its affectionate nature, and to convey thereby the moral that talents, however great, learning, however deep, were of no avail, unless rendered serviceable to Man. (Applause.) He must be pardoned, then, if, in order to effect this object, he was compelled to borrow some harmless effects from the stage. In a word, his Dog would represent to them the plot of a little drama. And he, though he could not say that he was altogether unaccustomed to public speaking (here a smile, modest, but august as that of some famous parliamentary orator who makes his first appearance at a vestry), still wholly new to its practice in the special part he had undertaken, would rely on their indulgence to efforts aspiring to no other merit than that of aiding the Hero of the piece in a familiar illustration of those qualities in which Dogs might give a lesson to Humanity. Again he bowed, and retired behind the curtain. A pause of three minutes; the curtain drew up. Could that be the same Mr. Chapman whom the spectators beheld before them? Could three minutes suffice to change the sleek, respectable, prosperous-looking gentleman who had just addressed them, into that image of threadbare poverty and hunger-pinched dejection? Little aid from theatrical costume: the clothes seemed the same, only to have grown wondrous aged and rusty. The face, the figure, the man—*these* had undergone a transmutation beyond the art of a mere stage wardrobe, be it ever so amply stored, to effect. But for the patch over the eye you could not have recognized Mr. Chapman. There was, indeed, about him still an air of dignity; but it was the dignity of woe — a dignity, too, not of an affable civilian, but of some veteran soldier. You could not mistake. Though not in uniform, the melancholy man must have been a warrior! The way the coat was buttoned across the chest, the black stock tightened round the throat, the shoulders thrown back in the disciplined habit of a life, though the head bent forward in the despondency of an eventful crisis— all spoke the decayed, but not ignoble, hero of a hundred fields.

There was something foreign, too, about the veteran's air. Mr. Chapman had looked so thoroughly English — that tragical and meagre personage, which had exfoliated an arid stem from Mr. Chapman's buxom leaves, looked so unequivocally French. Not a word had the Comedian yet said; and yet all this had the first sight of him conveyed to the audience. There was an amazed murmur, then breathless stillness. The story rapidly unfolded itself, partly by words, much more by look and action. There sate a soldier who had fought under Napoleon at Marengo and Austerlitz, gone through the snows of Muscovy, escaped the fires of Waterloo—the soldier of the Empire! Wondrous ideal of a wondrous time! and nowhere winning more respect and awe than in that land of the old English foe, in which, with slight knowledge of the Beautiful in Art, there is so reverent a sympathy for all that is grand in Man! There sate the soldier, penniless and friendless —there, scarcely seen, reclined his grandchild, weak and slowly dying for the want of food; and all that the soldier possesses wherewith to buy bread for the day is his cross of the Legion of Honor. It was given to him by the hand of the Emperor—must he pawn or sell it? Out on the pomp of decoration which we have substituted for the voice of passionate nature, on our fallen stage! Scenes so faithful to the shaft of a column — dresses by which an antiquary can define a date to a year! Is delusion there? Is it thus we are snatched from Thebes to Athens? No; place a really fine actor on a deal-board, and for Thebes and Athens you may hang up a blanket! Why, that very cross which the old soldier holds — away from his sight — in that tremulous hand, is but patched up from the foil and card-board bought at the stationer's shop. You might see it was nothing more, if you tried to see. Did a soul present think of such minute investigation? Not one. In the actor's hand that trumpery became at once the glorious thing by which Napoleon had planted the sentiment of knightly heroism in the men whom Danton would have launched upon earth ruthless and bestial, as galley-slaves that had burst their chain.

The badge wrought from foil and card-board took life and soul; it begot an interest, inspired a pathos, as much as if it had been made—oh, not of gold and gems, but of flesh and blood. And the simple broken words that the old Man addressed to it! The scenes, the fields, the hopes, the glories it conjured up! And now to be wrenched away—sold to supply Man's humblest, meanest wants—sold—the last symbol of such a past! It was indeed "*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*" *He* would have starved rather—but the Child? And then the child rose up and came into play. She would not suffer such a sacrifice—she was not hungry—she was not weak; and when voice failed her, she looked up into that iron face and smiled—nothing but a smile. Out came the pocket-

handkerchiefs! The soldier seizes the cross and turns away. It *shall* be sold! As he opens the door, a dog enters gravely—licks his hand, approaches the table, raises itself on its hind-legs, surveys the table dolefully, shakes its head, whines, comes to its master, pulls him by the skirt, looks into his face inquisitively.

What does all this mean? It soon comes out, and very naturally. The dog belonged to an old fellow-soldier, who had gone to the Isle of France to claim his share in the inheritance of a brother who had settled and died there, and who, meanwhile, had confided it to the care of our veteran, who was then in comparatively easy circumstances, since ruined by the failure and fraud of a banker to whom he had intrusted his all; and his small pension, including the yearly sum to which his cross entitled him, had been forestalled and mortgaged to pay the petty debts which, relying on his dividend from the banker, he had innocently incurred. The dog's owner had been gone for months; his return might be daily expected. Meanwhile the dog was at the hearth, but the wolf at the door. Now this sagacious animal had been taught to perform the duties of messenger and major-domo. At stated intervals, he applied to his master for *sous*, and brought back the supplies which the *sous* purchased. He now, as usual, came to the table for the accustomed coin—the last *sou* was gone—the dog's occupation was at an end. But could not the dog be sold? Impossible—it was the property of another—a sacred deposit; one would be as bad as the banker if one could apply to one's own necessities the property one held in trust. These little biographical particulars came out in that sort of bitter and pathetic humor which a study of Shakspeare, or the experience of actual life had taught the Comedian to be a natural relief to an intense sorrow. The dog meanwhile aided the narrative by his by-play. Still intent upon the *sous*, he thrust his nose into his master's pockets—he appealed touchingly to the child, and finally put back his head and vented his emotion in a lugubrious and elegiacal howl. Suddenly there is heard without the sound of a showman's tin trumpet! Whether the actor had got some obliging person to perform on that instrument, or whether, as more likely, it was but a trick of ventriloquism, we leave to conjecture. At that note, an idea seemed to seize the dog. He ran first to his master, who was on the threshold about to depart; pulled him back into the centre of the room; next he ran to the child, dragging her toward the same spot, though with great tenderness, and then, uttering a joyous bark, he raised himself on his hind-legs, and, with incomparable solemnity, performed a minuet step! The child catches the idea from the dog. "Was he not more worth seeing than the puppet-show in the streets? might not people give money to see him, and the old soldier still keep his cross? To-day there is a public *fête* in the gardens yonder; that showman must be going thither; why not go too?" What! he, the old soldier—he stoop to show off a dog! he! he! The dog looked at him deprecatingly, and stretched himself on the floor—lifeless!

Yes, that is the alternative—shall his child die too, and he be too proud to save her? Ah! and if the cross can be saved also! But pshaw! what did the dog know that people would care to see? Oh, much, much. When the child was alone and sad, it would come and play with her. See these old dominos! She ranged them on the floor, and the dog leaped up and came to prove his skill. Artfully, then, the Comedian had planned that the dog should make some sad mistakes, attended by some marvelous surprises. No, he would not do; yes, he would do. The audience took it seriously, and became intensely interested in the dog's success; so sorry for his blunders, so triumphant in his lucky hits. And then the child calmed the hasty, irritable old man so sweetly, and corrected the dog so gently, and talked to the animal; told it how much they relied on it, and produced an infant alphabet, and spelled out "Save us." The dog looked at the letters meditatively, and henceforth it was evident that he took more pains. Better and better; he will do, he will do! The child shall not starve, the cross shall not be sold! Down drops the curtain.—End of Act I.

Act II. opens with a dialogue spoken off the stage. Invisible *dramatis personæ*, that subsist, with airy tongues, upon the mimetic art of the Comedian. You understand that there is a vehement dispute going on. The dog must not be admitted into a part of the gardens where a more refined and exclusive section of the company have hired seats, in order to contemplate, without sharing, the rude dances or jostling promenade of the promiscuous merry-makers. Much hubbub, much humor; some persons for the dog, some against him; privilege and decorum here, equality and fraternity there. A Bonapartist colonel sees the cross on the soldier's breast, and, *mille tonnerres*, he settles the point. He pays for three reserved seats—one for the soldier, one for the child, and a third for the dog. The veteran enters; the child, not strong enough to have pushed through the crowd, raised on his shoulder, Rolla-like; the dog led by a string. He enters erect and warrior-like; his spirit has been roused by contest; his struggles have been crowned by victory. But (and here the art of the drama and the actor culminated toward the highest point)—but he now at once includes in the list of his *dramatis personæ* the whole of his Gatesboro' audience. *They are* that select company into which he has thus forced his way. As he sees them seated before him, so calm, orderly, and dignified, *mauvaise honte* steals over the breast more accustomed to front the cannon than the battery of ladies' eyes. He places the child in a chair, abashed and humbled; he drops into a seat beside her shrinkingly; and the dog, with more self-possession and sense of his own consequence, brushes with his paw some imaginary dust from a third chair, as in the superciliousness of the well-dressed, and then seats himself, and looks round with serene audacity.

The chairs were skillfully placed on one side of the stage, as close as possible to the front row of the audience. The soldier ventures a furtive glance along the lines, and then speaks to his grandchild in whispered, bated breath: "Now they are there, what are they come for? To beg? He can never have the boldness to exhibit an animal for *sous*—impossible; no, no, let them slink back again and sell the cross." And the child whispers courage; bids him look

again along the rows; those faces seem very kind. He again lifts his eyes, glances round, and with an extemporaneous tact that completed the illusion to which the audience were already gently lending themselves, made sundry complimentary comments on the different faces actually before him, selected most felicitously. The audience, taken by surprise, as some fair female, or kindly burgess, familiar to their associations, was thus pointed out to their applause, became heartily genial in their cheers and laughter. And the Comedian's face, unmoved by such demonstrations—so shy and sad—insinuated its pathos underneath cheer and laugh. You now learned through the child that a dance, on which the company had been supposed to be gazing, was concluded, and that they would not be displeased by an interval of some other diversion. Now was the time! The dog, as if to convey a sense of the prevalent ennui, yawned audibly, patted the child on the shoulder, and looked up in her face. "A game of dominos," whispered the little girl. The dog gleefully grinned assent. Timidly she stole forth the old dominos, and ranged them on the ground; on which she slipped from her chair; the dog slipped from his; they began to play. The experiment was launched; the soldier saw that the curiosity of the company was excited—that the show would commence—the *sous* follow; and as if he at least would not openly shame his service and his Emperor, he turned aside, slid his hand to his breast, tore away his cross, and hid it. Scarce a murmured word accompanied the action—the acting said all; and a noble thrill ran through the audience. Oh, sublime art of the mime!

The Mayor sat very near where the child and dog were at play. The Comedian had (as he before implied he would do) discreetly prepared that gentleman for direct and personal appeal. The little girl turned her blue eyes innocently toward Mr. Hartopp, and said, "The dog beats me, Sir; will you try what you can do?"

A roar, and universal clapping of hands, amidst which the worthy magistrate stepped on the stage. At the command of its young mistress, the dog made the magistrate a polite bow, and straight to the game went magistrate and dog. From that time the interest became, as it were, personal to all present. "Will you come, Sir?" said the child to a young gentleman, who was straining his neck to see how the dominos were played; "and observe that it is all fair. You too, Sir?" to Mr. Williams. The Comedian stood beside the dog, whose movements he directed with undetected skill, while appearing only to fix his eyes on the ground in conscious abasement. Those on the rows from behind now pressed forward; those in advance either came on the stage, or stood up intently contemplating. The Mayor was defeated, the crowd became too thick, and the caresses bestowed on the dog seemed to fatigue him. He rose and retreated to a corner haughtily. "Manners, Sir," said the soldier; "it is not for the like of us to be proud; excuse him, ladies and gentlemen."—"He only wishes to please all," said the child, deprecatingly. "Say how many would you have round us at a time, so that the rest may not be prevented seeing you?" She spread the multiplication figures before the dog; the dog put his paw on 10. "Astonishing!" said the Mayor; "Will you choose them yourself, Sir?" The dog nodded, walked leisurely round, keeping one eye toward the one eye of his master, and selected ten persons, among whom were the Mayor, Mr. Williams, and three pretty young ladies, who had been induced to ascend the stage. The others were chosen no less judiciously.

The dog was then led artfully on from one accomplishment to another, much within the ordinary range which bounds the instruction of learned animals. He was asked to say how many ladies were on the stage; he spelt three. What were their names? "The Graces." Then he was asked who was the first magistrate in the town. The dog made a bow to the Mayor. "What had made that gentleman first magistrate?" The dog looked to the alphabet and spelt "Worth." "Were there any persons present more powerful than the Mayor?" The dog bowed to the three young ladies. "What made them more powerful?" The dog spelt "Beauty." When ended the applause these answers received, the dog went through the musket exercise with the soldier's staff; and as soon as he had performed that, he came to the business part of the exhibition, seized the hat which his master had dropped on the ground, and carried it round to each person on the stage. They looked at one another. "He is a poor soldier's dog," said the child, hiding her face. "No, no; a soldier can not beg," cried the Comedian. The Mayor dropped a coin in the hat; others did the same, or affected to do it. The dog took the hat to his master, who waved him aside. There was a pause. The dog laid the hat softly at the soldier's feet, and looked up to the child beseechingly.

"What," asked she, raising her head proudly—"what secures Worth and defends Beauty?" The dog took up the staff and shouldered it. And to what can the soldier look for aid when he starves, and will not beg? The dog seemed puzzled—the suspense was awful. "Good Heavens," thought the Comedian, "if the brute should break down after all!—and when I took such care that the words should lie undisturbed—right before his nose!" With a deep sigh the veteran started from his despondent attitude, and crept along the floor as if for escape—so broken down, so crest-fallen. Every eye was on that heart-broken face and receding figure; and the eye of that heart-broken face was on the dog, and the foot of that receding figure seemed to tremble, recoil, start, as it passed by the alphabetical letters which still lay on the ground as last arranged. "Ah! to what should he look for aid?" repeated the grandchild, clasping her little hands. The dog had now caught the cue, and put his paw first upon "Worth," and then upon Beauty. "Worth!" cried the ladies—"Beauty!" exclaimed the Mayor. "Wonderful, wonderful!" "Take up the hat," said the child, and turning to the Mayor—"Ah! tell him, Sir, that what Worth and Beauty give to Valor in distress is not alms, but tribute."

The words were little better than a hack claptrap; but the sweet voice glided through the assembly, and found its way into every heart.

"Is it so?" asked the old soldier, as his hand hoveringly paused above the coins. "Upon my honor, it is, Sir," said the Mayor, with serious emphasis. The audience thought it the best speech he had ever made in his life, and cheered him till the roof rung again. "Oh! bread, bread, for you, Darling!" cried the veteran, bowing his head over the child, and taking out his cross and kissing it with passion; "and the badge of honor still for me!"

While the audience was in the full depth of its emotion, and generous tears in many an eye, Waife seized his moment, dropped the actor, and stepped forth to the front as the man—simple, quiet, earnest man—artless man!

"This is no mimic scene, ladies and gentlemen. It is a tale in real life that stands out before you. I am here to appeal to those hearts that are not vainly open to human sorrows. I plead for what I have represented. True, that the man who needs your aid is not of that soldiery which devastated Europe. But he has fought in battles as severe, and been left by fortune to as stern a desolation. True, he is not a Frenchman: he is one of a land you will not love less than France,—it is your own. He, too, has a child whom he would save from famine. He, too, has nothing left to sell or to pawn for bread—except—oh, not this gilded badge, see, this is only foil and card-board—except, I say, the thing itself, of which you respect even so poor a symbol—nothing left to sell or to pawn but Honor! For these I have pleaded this night as a showman; for these, less haughty than the Frenchman, I stretch my hands toward you without shame; for these I am a beggar."

He was silent. The dog quietly took up the hat and approached the Mayor again. The Mayor extracted the half-crown he had previously deposited, and dropped into the hat two golden sovereigns. Who does not guess the rest? All crowded forward—youth and age, man and woman. And most ardent of all were those whose life stands most close to vicissitude—most exposed to beggary—most sorely tried in the alternative between bread and honor. Not an operative there but spared his mite.

CHAPTER XIII.

Omne ignotum pro Magnifico—Rumor, knowing nothing of his antecedents, exalts Gentleman Waife into Don Magnifico.

The Comedian and his two coadjutors were followed to the Saracen's Head Inn by a large crowd, but at a respectful distance. Though I know few things less pleasing than to have been decoyed and entrapped into an unexpected demand upon one's purse—when one only counted, too, upon an agreeable evening—and hold, therefore, in just abhorrence the circulating plate which sometimes follows a popular oration, homily, or other eloquent appeal to British liberality; yet I will venture to say there was not a creature whom the Comedian had surprised into impulsive beneficence who regretted his action, grudged its cost, or thought he had paid too dear for his entertainment. All had gone through a series of such pleasurable emotions, that all had, as it were, wished a vent for their gratitude—and when the vent was found it became an additional pleasure. But, strange to say, no one could satisfactorily explain to himself these two questions—for what, and to whom, had he given his money? It was not a general conjecture that the exhibitor wanted the money for his own uses. No, despite the evidence in favor of that idea, a person so respectable, so dignified—addressing them, too, with that noble assurance to which a man who begs for himself is not morally entitled—a person thus characterized must be some high-hearted philanthropist who condescended to display his powers at an institute purely intellectual, perhaps on behalf of an eminent but decayed author, whose name, from the respect due to letters, was delicately concealed. Mr. Williams—considered the hardest head and most practical man in the town—originated and maintained that hypothesis. Probably the stranger was an author himself—a great and affluent author. Had not great and affluent authors—men who are the boast of our time and land—acted, yea, on a common stage, and acted inimitably, too, on behalf of some lettered brother or literary object? Therefore in these guileless minds, with all the pecuniary advantages of extreme penury and forlorn position, the Comedian obtained the respect due to prosperous circumstances and high renown. But there was one universal wish expressed by all who had been present, as they took their way homeward—and that wish was to renew the pleasure they had experienced, even if they paid the same price for it. Could not the long-closed theatre be reopened, and the great man be induced by philanthropic motives, and an assured sum, raised by voluntary subscriptions, to gratify the whole town, as he had gratified its selected intellect? Mr. Williams, in a state of charitable thaw, now softest of the soft, like most hard men when once softened, suggested this idea to the Mayor. The Mayor said, evasively, that he would think of it, and that he intended to pay his respects to Mr. Chapman before he returned home—that very night—it was proper. Mr. Williams and many others wished to accompany his worship. But the kind magistrate suggested that Mr. Chapman would be greatly fatigued; that the presence of many might seem more an intrusion than a compliment; that he, the Mayor, had better go alone, and at a somewhat later hour, when Mr. Chapman, though not retired to bed, might have had time for rest and refreshment. This delicate consideration had its weight; and the streets were thin when the Mayor's gig stopped, in its way villa-ward, at the Saracen's Head.

CHAPTER XIV.

It is the interval between our first repinings and our final resignation, in which, both with individuals and communities, is to be found all that makes a History worth telling. Ere yet we yearn for what is out of our reach, we are still in the cradle. When wearied out with our yearnings, Desire again falls asleep—we are on the death-bed.

Sophy (leaning on her grandfather's arm, as they ascend the stair of the Saracen's Head). "But I am so tired, grandy—I'd rather go to bed at once, please."

GENTLEMAN WAIFE. "Surely you could take something to eat first—something nice, Miss Chapman? (whispering close) We can live in clover now"—a phrase which means (aloud to the landlady, who crossed the landing-place above) "grilled chicken and mushrooms for supper, ma'am! Why don't you smile, Sophy? Oh, darling, you are ill!"

"No, no, grandy dear—only tired—let me go to bed. I shall be better to-morrow—I shall indeed!"

Waife looked fondly into her face, but his spirits were too much exhilarated to allow him to notice the unusual flush upon her cheek, except with admiration of the increased beauty which the heightened color gave to her soft features.

"Well," said he, "you *are* a pretty child!—a very pretty child—and you act wonderfully. You would make a fortune on the stage, but—"

SOPHY (eagerly). "But no, no, never!—not the stage!"

WAIFE. "I don't wish you to go on the stage, as you know. A private exhibition—like the one to-night, for instance—has (thrusting his hand into his pocket) much to recommend it."

SOPHY (with a sigh). "Thank Heaven, that is over now, and you'll not be in want of money for a long, long time! Dear Sir Isaac!"

She began caressing Sir Isaac, who received her attentions with solemn pleasure. They were now in Sophy's room; and Waife, after again pressing the child in vain to take some refreshment, bestowed on her his kiss and blessing, and whistled *Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre* to Sir Isaac, who, considering that melody an invitation to supper, licked his lips, and stalked forth, rejoicing, but decorous.

Left alone, the child breathed long and hard, pressing her hands to her bosom, and sunk wearily on the foot of the bed. There were no shutters to the window, and the moonlight came in gently, stealing across that part of the wall and floor which the ray of the candle left in shade. The girl raised her eyes slowly toward the window—toward the glimpse of the blue sky, and the slanting lustre of the moon. There is a certain epoch in our childhood when what is called the romance of sentiment first makes itself vaguely felt. And ever with the dawn of that sentiment the moon and the stars take a strange and haunting fascination. Few persons in middle life—even though they be genuine poets—feel the peculiar spell in the severe stillness and mournful splendor of starry skies which impresses most of us, even though no poets at all, in that mystic age when childhood nearly touches upon youth, and turns an unquiet heart to those marvelous riddles within us and without, which we cease to conjecture when experience has taught us that they have no solution upon this side the grave. Lured by the light, the child rose softly, approached the window, and resting her upturned face upon both hands, gazed long in the heavens, communing evidently with herself, for her lips moved and murmured indistinctly. Slowly she retired from the casement, and again seated herself at the foot of the bed, disconsolate. And then her thoughts ran somewhat thus, though she might not have shaped them exactly in the same words: "No! I can not understand it. Why was I contented and happy before I knew *him?* Why did I see no harm, no shame in this way of life—not even on that stage with those people—until *he* said, 'It was what he wished I had never stooped to.' And grandfather says our paths are so different, they can not cross each other again. There is a path of life, then, which I can never enter; there is a path on which I must always, always walk—always, always, always that path—no escape! Never to come into that other one where there is no disguise, no hiding, no false names—never, never!" She started impatiently, and with a wild look, "It is killing me!"

Then, terrified by her own impetuosity, she threw herself on the bed, weeping low. Her heart had now gone back to her grandfather; it was smiting her for ingratitude to him. Could there be shame or wrong in what he asked—in what he did? And was she to murmur if she aided him to exist? What was the opinion of a stranger boy, compared to the approving, sheltering love of her sole guardian and tried, fostering friend? And could people choose their own callings and modes of life? If one road went this way, another that; and they on the one road were borne farther and farther away from those on the other—as that idea came, consolation stopped, and in her noiseless weeping there was a bitterness as of despair. But the tears ended by relieving the grief that caused them. Wearied out of conjecture and complaint, her mind relapsed into the old native, childish submission. With a fervor in which there was self-reproach, she repeated her meek, nightly prayer, that God would bless her dear grandfather, and suffer her to be his comfort and support. Then mechanically she undressed, extinguished the candle, and crept into bed. The moonlight became bolder and bolder; it advanced up the floors, along the walls; now it floods her very pillow, and seems to her eyes to take a holy, loving kindness, holier and more loving as the lids droop beneath it. A vague remembrance of some tale of "Guardian spirits," with which Waife had once charmed her wonder, stirred through her lulling thoughts, linking itself with the presence of that encircling moonlight. There! see, the eyelids are closed—no tear upon their fringe. See the dimples steal out as the sweet lips are parted. She sleeps, she dreams already! Where and what is the rude world of waking now? Are there *not* guardian spirits? Deride the question if thou wilt, stern man, the reasoning and self-reliant; but thou, O fair mother, who hast marked the strange happiness on the face of a child that has wept itself to sleep—what sayest *thou* to the soft tradition, which surely had its origin in the heart of the earliest mother?

CHAPTER XV.

There is no man so friendless but what he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths.

MEANWHILE the Comedian had made himself and Sir Isaac extremely comfortable. No unabstemious man by habit was Gentleman Waife. He could dine on a crust, and season it with mirth; and as for exciting drinks, there was a childlike innocence in his humor never

known to a brain that has been washed in alcohol. But on this special occasion, Waife's heart was made so bounteous by the novel sense of prosperity that it compelled him to treat himself. He did honor to the grilled chicken, to which he had vainly tempted Sophy. He ordered half a pint of port to be mulled into negus. He helped himself with a bow, as if himself were a guest, and nodded each time he took off his glass, as much as to say, "Your health, Mr. Waife!" He even offered a glass of the exhilarating draught to Sir Isaac, who, exceedingly offended, retreated under the sofa, whence he peered forth through his deciduous ringlets, with brows knit in grave rebuke. Nor was it without deliberate caution—a whisker first, and then a paw—that he emerged from his retreat, when a plate, heaped with the remains of the feast, was placed upon the hearth-rug.

The supper over and the attendant gone, the negus still left, Waife lighted his pipe, and gazing on Sir Isaac, thus addressed that canine philosopher: "Illustrious member of the Quadrupedal Society of Friends to Man, and as possessing those abilities for practical life which but few friends to man ever display in his service, promoted to high rank—Commissary General of the Victualing Department, and Chancellor of the Exchequer—I have the honor to inform you that a vote of thanks in your favor has been proposed in this House, and carried unanimously." Sir Isaac, looking shy, gave another lick to the plate, and wagged his tail. "It is true that thou wert once (shall I say it?) in fault at 'Beauty and Worth;' thy memory deserted thee; thy peroration was on the verge of a break-down: but 'Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit,' as the Latin grammar philosophically expresseth it. Mortals the wisest, not only on two legs, but even upon four, occasionally stumble. The greatest general, statesman, sage, is not he who commits no blunder, but he who best repairs a blunder, and converts it to success. This was thy merit and distinction! It hath never been mine! I recognize thy superior genius. I place in thee unqualified confidence; and consigning thee to the arms of Morpheus, since I see that panegyric acts on thy nervous system as a salubrious soporific, I now move that this House do resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for the Consideration of the Budget!"

Therewith, while Sir Isaac fell into a profound sleep, the Comedian deliberately emptied his pockets on the table; and arranging gold and silver before him, thrice carefully counted the total, and then divided it into sundry small heaps.

"That's for the bill," quoth he—"Civil List!—a large item. That's for Sophy, the darling! She shall have a teacher, and learn French—Education Grant. Current Expenses for the next fortnight; Miscellaneous Estimates—tobacco—we'll call that Secret Service Money. Ah, scamp, vagrant! is not Heaven kind to thee at last? A few more such nights, and who knows but thine old age may have other roof than the work-house? And Sophy? Ah, what of her? Merciful Providence, spare my life till she has outgrown its uses!" A tear came to his eye; he brushed it away quickly, and re-counting his money, hummed a joyous tune.

The door opened; Waife looked up in surprise, sweeping his hand over the coins, and restoring them to his pocket.

The Mayor entered.

As Mr. Hartopp walked slowly up the room, his eye fixed Waife's; and that eye was so searching, though so mild, that the Comedian felt himself change color. His gay spirits fell—falling lower and lower, the nearer the Mayor's step came to him; and when Hartopp, without speaking, took his hand—not in compliment—not in congratulation, but pressed it as if in deep compassion, still looking him full in the face, with those pitying, penetrating eyes, the Actor experienced a sort of shock, as if he were read through, despite all his histrionic disguises—read through to his heart's core; and, as silent as his visitor, sunk back on his chair abashed—disconcerted.

Mr. Hartopp. "Poor man!"

The Comedian (rousing himself with an effort, but still confused). "Down, Sir Isaac, down! This visit, Mr. Mayor, is an honor which may well take a dog by surprise! Forgive him!"

Mr. Hartopp (patting Sir Isaac, who was inquisitively sniffing his garments, and drawing a chair close to the Actor, who thereon edged his own chair a little away—in vain; for, on that movement, Mr. Hartopp advanced in proportion). "Your dog is a very admirable and clever animal; but in the exhibition of a learned dog, there is something which tends to sadden one. By what privations has he been forced out of his natural ways? By what fastings and severe usage have his instincts been distorted into tricks? Hunger is a stern teacher, Mr. Chapman; and to those whom it teaches, we can not always give praise unmixed with pity."

The Comedian (ill at ease under this allegorical tone, and surprised at quicker intelligence in Mr. Hartopp than he had given that person credit for)—"You speak like an oracle, Mr. Mayor; but that dog, at least, has been mildly educated, and kindly used. Inborn genius, Sir, will have its vent. Hum! a most intelligent audience honored us to-night; and our best thanks are due to you."

Mr. Hartopp. "Mr. Chapman, let us be frank with each other. I am not a clever man—perhaps a dull one. If I had set up for a clever man I should not be where I am now. Hush! no compliments. But my life has brought me into frequent contact with those who suffer; and the dullest of us gain a certain sharpness in the matters to which our observation is habitually drawn. You took me in at first, it is true. I thought you were a philanthropical humorist, who might have crotchets, as many benevolent men, with time on their hands and money in their pockets, are apt to form. But when it came to the begging hat (I ask your pardon—don't let me offend you)—when it came to the begging hat, I recognized the man who wants philanthropy from others, and whose crotchets are to be regarded in a professional point of view. Sir, I have come here alone, because I alone perhaps see the case as it really is. Will you confide in me? you may do it safely. To be plain, who and what are you?"

The Comedian (evasively). "What do you take me for, Mr. Mayor? What can I be other

than an itinerent showman, who has had resort to a harmless stratagem in order to obtain an audience, and create a surprise that might cover the naked audacity of the 'begging hat?'"

Mr. Hartopp (gravely). "When a man of your ability and education is reduced to such stratagems, he must have committed some great faults. Pray Heaven it be no worse than faults!"

The Comedian (bitterly). "That is always the way with the prosperous. Is a man unfortunate—they say, 'Why don't he help himself?' Does he try to help himself—they say, 'With so much ability, why does not he help himself better?' Ability and education! Snares and springes, Mr. Mayor! Ability and education! the two worst man-traps that a poor fellow can put his foot into! Aha! Did not you say if you had set up to be clever, you would not be where you now are? A wise saying; I admire you for it. Well, well, I and my dog have amused your townsfolk; they have amply repaid us. We are public servants; according as we act in public—hiss us or applaud. Are we to submit to an inquisition into our private character? Are you to ask how many mutton bones has that dog stolen! how many cats has he worried! or how many shirts has the showman in his wallet! how many debts has he left behind him! what is his rent-roll on earth, and his account with heaven!—go and put those questions to ministers, philosophers, generals, poets. When they have acknowledged your right to put them, come to me and the other dog!"

Mr. Hartopp (rising and drawing on his gloves). "I beg your pardon! I have done, Sir. And yet I conceived an interest in you. It is because I have no talents myself that I admire those who have. I felt a mournful anxiety, too, for your poor little girl—so young, so engaging. And is it necessary that you should bring up that child in a course of life certainly equivocal, and to females dangerous?"

The Comedian lifted his eyes suddenly, and stared hard at the face of his visitor, and in that face there was so much of benevolent humanity—so much sweetness contending with authoritative rebuke—that the vagabond's hardihood gave way; he struck his breast and groaned aloud.

Mr. Hartopp (pressing on the advantage he had gained). "And have you no alarm for her health? Do you not see how delicate she is? Do you not see that her very talent comes from her susceptibility to emotions, which must wear her away?"

Waife. "No, no! stop, stop, stop! you terrify me, you break my heart. Man, man! it is all for her that I toil, and show, and beg—if you call it begging. Do you think I care what becomes of this battered hulk? Not a straw. What am I to do? What! what! You tell me to confide in you—wherefore? How can you help me? Who can help me? Would you give me employment? What am I fit for? Nothing! You could find work and bread for an Irish laborer, nor ask who or what he was; but to a man who strays toward you, seemingly from that sphere in which, if Poverty enters, she drops a courtesy, and is called 'genteel,' you cry, 'Hold, produce your passport; where are your credentials—references?' I have none. I have slipped out of the world I once moved in. I can no more appeal to those I knew in it than if I had transmigrated from one of yon stars, and said, 'See *there* what I was once!' Oh, but you do not think she looks ill!—do you? do you? Wretch that I am! And I thought to save her!"

The old man trembled from head to foot, and his cheek was as pale as ashes.

Again the good magistrate took his hand, but this time the clasp was encouraging. "Cheer up; where there is a will there is a way; you justify the opinion I formed in your favor, despite all circumstances to the contrary. When I asked you to confide in me, it was not from curiosity, but because I would serve you, if I can. Reflect on what I have said. True, you can know but little of me. Learn what is said of me by my neighbors before you trust me further. For the rest, to-morrow you will have many proposals to renew your performance. Excuse me if I do not actively encourage it. I will not, at least, interfere to your detriment; but—"

"But," exclaimed Waife, not much heeding this address—"but you think she looks ill? you think this is injuring her? you think I am murdering my grandchild—my angel of life, my all!"

"Not so; I spoke too bluntly. Yet still—"

"Yes, yes; yet still—"

"Still, if you love her so dearly, would you blunt her conscience and love of truth? Were you not an impostor to-night? Would you ask her to reverence, and imitate, and pray for an impostor?"

"I never saw it in that light!" faltered Waife, struck to the soul; "never, never, so help me Heaven!"

"I felt sure you did not," said the Mayor; "you saw but the sport of the thing; you took to it as a school-boy. I have known many such men, with high animal spirits like yours. Such men err thoughtlessly; but did they ever sin consciously, they could not keep those high spirits! Good-night, Mr. Chapman, I shall hear from you again."

The door closed on the form of the visitor; Waife's head sunk on his breast, and all the deep lines upon brow and cheek stood forth, records of mighty griefs revived—a countenance so altered, now that its innocent arch play was gone, that you would not have known it. At length he rose very quietly, took up the candle, and stole into Sophy's room. Shading the light with careful hand, he looked on her face as she slept. The smile was still upon the parted lip—the child was still in the fairy land of dreams. But the cheek was thinner than it had been weeks ago, and the little hand that rested on the coverlet seemed wasted. Waife took that hand noiselessly into his own; it was hot and dry. He dropped it with a look of unutterable fear and anguish; and shaking his head piteously, stole back again. Seating himself by the table at which he had been caught counting his gains, he folded his arms and rooted his gaze on the floor; and there, motionless, and as if in stupefied suspense of thought itself, he sate till the dawn crept over the sky—till the sun shone into the windows. The dog, crouched at his feet, sometimes started up and whined as to attract his notice: he did not heed it. The

clock struck six, the house began to stir. The chambermaid came into the room; Waife rose and took his hat, brushing its nap mechanically with his sleeve. "Who did you say was the best here?" he asked with a vacant smile, touching the chambermaid's arm.

"Sir! the best—what?"

"The best doctor, ma'am—none of your parish apothecaries—the best physician—Dr. Gill—did you say Gill? Thank you; his address, High Street. Close by, ma'am." With his grand bow, such is habit!—Gentleman Waife smiled graciously, and left the room. Sir Isaac stretched himself, and followed.

CHAPTER XVI.

In every civilized society there is found a race of men who retain the instincts of the aboriginal cannibal, and live upon their fellow-men as a natural food. These interesting but formidable bipeds, having caught their victim, invariably select one part of his body on which to fasten their relentless grinders. The part thus selected is peculiarly susceptible, Providence having made it alive to the least nibble; it is situated just above the hip-joint, it is protected by a tegument of exquisite fibre, vulgarly called "THE BREECHES POCKET." The thoroughbred Anthropophagite usually begins with his own relations and friends; and so long as he confines his voracity to the domestic circle, the Laws interfere little, if at all, with his venerable propensities. But when he has exhausted all that allows itself to be edible in the bosom of private life, the Man-eater falls loose on Society, and takes to prowling—then "*Sauve qui peut!*" the Laws rouse themselves, put on their spectacles, call for their wigs and gowns, and the Anthropophagite turned prowler is not always sure of his dinner. It is when he has arrived at this stage of development that the Man-eater becomes of importance, enters into the domain of History, and occupies the thoughts of Moralists.

On the same morning in which Waife thus went forth from the "Saracen's Head" in quest of the doctor, but at a later hour, a man, who, to judge by the elaborate smartness of his attire, and the jaunty assurance of his saunter, must have wandered from the gay purlieus of Regent Street, threaded his way along the silent and desolate thoroughfares that intersect the remotest districts of Bloomsbury. He stopped at the turn into a small street still more sequestered than those which led to it, and looked up to the angle on the wall whereon the name of the street should have been inscribed. But the wall had been lately whitewashed, and the whitewash had obliterated the expected epigraph. The man muttered an impatient execration; and turning round as if to seek a passenger of whom to make inquiry, beheld, on the opposite side of the way, another man apparently engaged in the same research. Involuntarily each crossed over the road toward the other.

"Pray, Sir," quoth the second wayfarer in that desert, "can you tell me if this is a street that is called a Place—Poddon Place, Upper?"

"Sir," returned the spruce wayfarer, "it is the question I would have asked of you."

"Strange!"

"Very strange indeed that more than one person can, in this busy age, employ himself in discovering a Poddon Place! Not a soul to inquire of—not a shop that I see—not an orange stall!"

"Ha!" cried the other, in a hoarse sepulchral voice—"Ha! there is a pot-boy! Boy—boy—boy! I say; Hold, there! hold! Is this Poddon Place—Upper?"

"Yes, it be," answered the pot-boy, with a sleepy air, caught in that sleepy atmosphere; and chiming his pewter against an area rail with a dull clang, he chanted forth "Pots oho!" with a note as dirge-like as that which in the City of the Plague chanted "Out with the dead!"

Meanwhile the two wayfarers exchanged bows and parted—the sprucer wayfarer, whether from the indulgence of a reflective mood, or from an habitual indifference to things and persons not concerning him, ceased to notice his fellow-solitary, and rather busied himself in sundry little coquetries appertaining to his own person. He passed his hand through his hair, rearranged the cock of his hat, looked complacently at his boots, which still retained the gloss of the morning's varnish, drew down his wristbands, and, in a word, gave sign of a man who desires to make an effect, and feels that he ought to do it. So occupied was he in this self-commune, that when he stopped at length at one of the small doors in the small street, and lifted his hand to the knocker, he started to see that Wayfarer the Second was by his side.

The two men now examined each other briefly but deliberately. Wayfarer the First was still young—certainly handsome, but with an indescribable look about the eye and lip, from which the other recoiled with an instinctive awe—a hard look, a cynical look—a sidelong, quiet, defying, remorseless look. His clothes were so new of gloss, that they seemed put on for the first time, were shaped to the prevailing fashion, and of a taste for colors less subdued than is usual with Englishmen, yet still such as a person of good mien could wear without incurring the charge of vulgarity, though liable to that of self-conceit. If you doubted that the man were a gentleman, you would have been puzzled to guess what else he could be. Were it not for the look we have mentioned, and which was perhaps not habitual, his appearance might have been called prepossessing. In his figure there was the grace, in his step the elasticity, which come from just proportions and muscular strength. In his hand he carried a supple switch stick, slight and innocuous to appearance, but weighted at the handle after the fashion of a life-preserver. The tone of his voice was not displeasing to the ear, though there might be something artificial in the swell of it—the sort of tone men assume when they desire to seem more frank and off-hand than belongs to their nature—a sort of rollicking tone which is to the voice what swagger is to the gait. Still that look!—it produced on you the effect which might be created by some strange animal, not without beauty, but deadly to man. Wayfarer the Second was big and burly, middle-aged, large-whiskered, his complexion dirty. He wore a wig—a wig evident, unmistakable—a wig curled and rusty—over the wig a dingy white hat. His black stock fitted tight round his throat, and across his breast he had thrown the folds of a Scotch plaid.

WAYFARER THE FIRST. "You call here, too—on Mrs. Crane?"

WAYFARER THE SECOND. "Mrs. Crane?—you too? Strange!"

Wayfarer the First (with constrained civility). "Sir, I call on business—private business."

Wayfarer the Second (with candid surliness). "So do I."

Wayfarer the First. "Oh!"

Wayfarer the Second. "Ha! the locks unbar!"

The door opened, and an old meagre woman-servant presented herself.

Wayfarer the First (gliding before the big man with a serpent's undulating celerity of movement). "Mrs. Crane lives here?"—"Yes." "She's at home, I suppose?"—"Yes!" "Take up my card; say I come alone—not with this gentleman."

Wayfarer the Second seems to have been rather put out by the manner of his rival. He recedes a step.

"You know the lady of this mansion well, Sir?"

"Extremely well."

"Ha! then I yield you the precedence; I yield it, Sir, but conditionally. You will not be long?"

"Not a moment longer than I can help; the land will be clear for you in an hour or less."

"Or less, so please you, let it be or less. Servant, Sir."

"Sir, yours.—Come, my Hebe; track the dancers, that is, go up the stairs, and let me renew the dreams of youth in the eyes of Crane!"

The old woman, meanwhile, had been turning over the card in her withered palm, looking from the card to the visitor's face, and then to the card again, and mumbling to herself. At length she spoke:

"You, Mr. Losely—you!—Jasper Losely! how you be changed! what ha' ye done to yourself? where's your comeliness? where's the look that stole ladies' hearts?—you, Jasper Losely! you are his goblin!"

"Hold your peace, old hussey!" said the visitor, evidently annoyed at remarks so disparaging, "I am Jasper Losely, more bronzed of cheek, more iron of hand." He raised his switch with a threatening gesture, that might be in play; for the lips wore smiles, or might be in earnest, for the brows were bent; and pushing into the passage, and shutting the door, said—"Is your mistress up stairs? show me to her room, or—" The old crone gave him one angry glance, which sunk frightened beneath the cruel gleam of his eyes, and hastening up the stairs with a quicker stride than her age seemed to warrant, cried out—"Mistress, mistress! here is Mr. Losely!—Jasper Losely himself!" By the time the visitor had reached the landing-place of the first floor, a female form had emerged from a room above;—a female face peered over the banisters. Losely looked up and started as he saw it. A haggard face—the face of one over whose life there has passed a blight. When last seen by him it had possessed beauty, though of a masculine rather than womanly character. Now of that beauty not a trace! the cheeks sunken and hollow, left the nose sharp, long, beaked as a bird of prey. The hair, once glossy in its ebon hue, now grizzled, harsh, neglected, hung in tortured tangled meshes—a study for an artist who would paint a fury. But the eyes were bright—brighter than ever; bright now with a glare that lighted up the whole face bending over the man. In those burning eyes was there love? was there hate? was there welcome? was there menace? Impossible to distinguish; but at least one might perceive that there was joy.

"So," said the voice from above, "so we do meet at last, Jasper Losely; you are come!"

Drawing a loose kind of dressing-robe more closely round her, the mistress of the house now descended the stairs—rapidly, flittingly, with a step noiseless as a spectre's, and, grasping Losely firmly by the hand, led him into a chill, dank, sunless drawing-room, gazing into his face fixedly all the while.

He winced and writhed. "There, there, let us sit down, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"And once I was called Bella."

"Ages ago! *Basta!* All things have their end. Do take those eyes of yours off my face; they were always so bright!—and really now they are perfect burning glasses! How close it is. Peuh! I am dead tired. May I ask for a glass of water—a drop of wine in it—or—brandy will do as well?"

"Ho! you have come to brandy, and morning drams—eh, Jasper?" said Mrs. Crane, with a strange, dreary accent. "I too once tried if fire could burn up thought, but it did not succeed with me; that is years ago;—and—there—see, the bottles are full still!"

While thus speaking, she had unlocked a chiffonier of the shape usually found in "genteel lodgings," and taken out a leather spirit-case containing four bottles, with a couple of wine-glasses. This case she placed on the table before Mr. Losely, and contemplated him at leisure while he helped himself to the raw spirits.

As she thus stood, an acute student of Lavater might have recognized, in her harsh and wasted countenance, signs of an original nature superior to that of her visitor; on her knitted brow, a sense higher in quality than on his smooth, low forehead; on her straight, stern lip, less cause for distrust than in the false good-humor which curved his handsome mouth into that smile of the fickle, which, responding to mirth but not to affection, is often lighted and never warmed. It is true that in that set pressure of her lip there might be cruelty, and, still more, the secretiveness which can harbor deceit; and yet, by the nervous workings of that lip, when relieved from such pressure, you would judge the woman to be rather by natural temperament passionate and impulsive than systematically cruel or deliberately false—false or cruel only as some predominating passion became the soul's absolute tyrant, and adopted the tyrant's vices. Above all, in those very lines destructive to beauty, that had been plowed, not by time, over her sallow cheeks, there was written the susceptibility to grief, to shame, to the sense of fall, which was not visible in the unreflective reckless aspect of the sleek human animal before her.

In the room, too, there were some evidences of a cultivated taste. On the walls, bookshelves, containing volumes of a decorous and severe literature, such as careful parents allow to studious daughters—the stately master-pieces of Fenelon and Racine—selections, approved by boarding-schools, from Tasso, Dante, Metastasio;—among English authors, Addison, John-

son, Blair (his lectures as well as sermons)—elementary works on such sciences as admit female neophytes into their porticoes if not into their penetralia—botany, chemistry, astronomy. Prim as soldiers on parade stood the books—not a gap in their ranks—evidently never now displaced for recreation—well bound, yet faded, dusty;—relics of a by-gone life. Some of them might perhaps have been prizes at school, or birth-day gifts from proud relations. There, too, on the table, near the spirit-case, lay open a once handsome work-box—no silks now on the skeleton reels—discolored, but not by use, in its nest of tarnished silk, slept the golden thimble. There, too, in the corner, near a music-stand piled high with musical compositions of various schools and graduated complexity, from "lessons for beginners" to the most arduous gamut of a German oratorio, slunk pathetically a poor lute harp, the strings long since broken. There, too, by the window, hung a wire bird-cage, the bird long since dead. In a word, round the woman gazing on Jasper Losely, as he complacently drank his brandy, grouped the forlorn tokens of an early state—the lost golden age of happy girlish studies, of harmless girlish tastes.

"*Basta*—eno'," said Mr. Losely, pushing aside the glass which he had twice filled and twice drained—"to business. Let me see the child—I feel up to it now."

A darker shade fell over Arabella Crane's face as she said:

"The child—she is not here! I have disposed of her long ago."

"Eh! disposed of her! what do you mean?"

"Do you ask as if you feared I had put her out of the world? No! Well, then—you come to England to see the child? You miss—you love, the child of that—of that—" She paused, checked herself, and added in an altered voice—"of that honest, high-minded gentlewoman, whose memory must be so dear to me—you love that child; very natural, Jasper."

"Love her! a child I have scarcely seen since she was born!—do talk common sense. No. But have I not told you that she ought to be money's worth to me—ay, and she shall be yet, despite that proud man's disdainful insolence."

"That proud man—what! you have ventured to address him—visit him—since your return to England?"

"Of course. That's what brought me over. I imagined the man would rejoice at what I told him—open his purse-strings—lavish blessings and bank-notes. And the brute would not even believe me—all because—"

"Because you had sold the right to be believed before. I told you, when I took the child, that you would never succeed there—that I would never encourage you in the attempt. But you had sold the future, as you sold your past—too cheaply, it seems, Jasper."

"Too cheaply, indeed. Who could ever have supposed that I should have been fobbed off with such a pittance?"

"Who, indeed, Jasper! You were made to spend fortunes, and call them pittances when spent, Jasper! You should have been a prince, Jasper—such princely tastes! Trinkets and dress, horses and dice, and plenty of ladies to look and die! Such princely spirit too!—bounding all return for loyal sacrifice to the honor you vouchsafed in accepting it!"

Uttering this embittered irony, which nevertheless seemed rather to please than to offend her guest, she kept moving about the room, and (whether from some drawer in the furniture, or from her own person, Losely's careless eye did not observe) she suddenly drew forth a miniature, and, placing it before him, exclaimed, "Ah, but you are altered from those days—see what you then were!" Losely's gaze thus abruptly invited, fixed itself on the effigies of a youth eminently handsome, and of that kind of beauty which, without being effeminate, approaches to the fineness and brilliancy of the female countenance—a beauty which renders its possessor inconveniently conspicuous, and too often, by winning that ready admiration which it costs no effort to obtain, withdraws the desire of applause from successes to be achieved by labor, and hardens egotism by the excuses it lends to self-esteem. It is true that this handsome face had not the elevation bestowed by thoughtful expression; but thoughtful expression is not the attribute a painter seeks to give to the abstract comeliness of early youth—and it is seldom to be acquired without that constitutional wear and tear which is injurious to mere physical beauty. And over the whole countenance was diffused a sunny light, the freshness of thoughtless health, of luxuriant vigor, so that even that arrogant vanity which an acute observer might have detected as the prevailing mental characteristic, seemed but a glad exultation in the gifts of benignant nature. Not there the look which, in the matured man gazing on the bright ghost of his former self, might have daunted the timid and warned the wise. "And I was like this. True! I remember well when it was taken, and no one called it flattering," said Mr. Losely, with pathetic self-condolence. "But I can't be very much changed," he added, with a half laugh. "At my age one may have a manlier look, yet—"

"Yet still be handsome, Jasper," said Mrs. Crane. "You are so. But look at me—what am I?"

"Oh, a very fine woman, my dear Crane—always were. But you neglect yourself; you should not do that; keep it up to the last. Well, but to return to the child. You have disposed of her without my consent, without letting me know."

"Letting you know! How many years is it since you even gave me your address? Never fear, she is in good hands."

"Whose? At all events I must see her."

"See her! What for?"

"What for! Hang it, it is natural that, now I am in England, I should at least wish to know what she is like. And I think it very strange that you should send her away, and then make all these difficulties. What's your object? I don't understand it."

"My object! What could be my object but to serve you? At your request I took, fed, reared a child, whom you could not expect me to love, at my own cost. Did I ever ask you for a shilling? Did I ever suffer you to give me one? Never! At last, hearing no more *from* you, and what little I heard *of* you, making me think that if any thing happened to me (and I was very ill

at the time), you could only find her a burden; at last, I say, the old man came to me—you had given him my address—and he offered to take her, and I consented. She is with him."

"The old man! She is with him! And where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Humph! How does he live? Can he have got any money?"

"I don't know."

"Did any old friends take him up?"

"Would he go to old friends?"

Mr. Losely tossed off two fresh glasses of brandy, one after the other, and, rising, walked to and fro the room, his hands buried in his pockets, and in no comfortable vein of reflection. At length he paused, and said, "Well, upon the whole, I don't see what I could do with the girl just at present, though, of course, I ought to know where she is, and with whom. Tell me, Mrs. Crane, what is she like—pretty or plain?"

"I suppose the chit would be called pretty—by some persons at least."

"*Very* pretty? handsome?" asked Losely, abruptly.

"Handsome or not, what does it signify? what good comes of beauty? You had beauty enough; what have you done with it?"

At that question Losely drew himself up with a sudden loftiness of look and gesture, which, though prompted but by offended vanity, improved the expression of the countenance, and restored to it much of its earlier character. Mrs. Crane gazed on him, startled into admiration, and it was in an altered voice, half reproachful, half bitter, that she continued—

"And now that you are satisfied about her, have you no questions to ask about me—what I do—how I live?"

"My dear Mrs. Crane, I know that you are comfortably off, and were never of a mercenary temper. I trust you are happy, and so forth—I wish I were; things don't prosper with me. If you could conveniently lend me a five-pound note—"

"You would borrow of me, Jasper? Ah! you come to me in your troubles. You shall have the money—five pounds—ten pounds—what you please, but you will call again for it? you need me now—you will not utterly desert me now?"

"Best of creatures! never!" He seized her hand, and kissed it. She withdrew it quickly from his clasp, and, glancing over him from head to foot, said, "But are you really in need? you are well-dressed, Jasper; that you always were."

"Not always; three days ago very much the reverse; but I have had a trifling aid, and—"

"Aid in England? from whom? where? Not from him whom, you say, you had the courage to seek?"

"From whom else? Have I no claim? A miserable alms flung to me. Curse him! I tell you that man's look and language so galled me—so galled," echoed Losely, shifting his hold from the top of his switch to the centre, and bringing the murderous weight of the lead down on the palm of his other hand, "that, if his eye had quitted me for a moment, I think I must have brained him, and been—"

"Hanged!" said Mrs. Crane.

"Of course, hanged," returned Losely, resuming the reckless voice and manner in which there was that peculiar levity which comes from hardness of heart, as from the steel's hardness comes the blade's play. "But if a man did not sometimes forget consequences, there would be an end of the gallows. I am glad that his eye never left mine." And the leaden head of the switch fell with a dull, dumb sound on the floor.

Mrs. Crane made no immediate rejoinder, but fixed on her lawless visitor a gaze in which there was no womanly fear (though Losely's aspect and gesture might have sent a thrill through the nerves of many a hardy man), but which was not without womanly compassion, her countenance gradually softening more and more, as if under the influence of recollections mournful but not hostile. At length she said, in a low voice, "Poor Jasper! Is all the vain ambition that made you so false shrunk into a ferocity that finds you so powerless? Would your existence, after all, have been harder, poorer, meaner, if your faith had been kept to me!"

Evidently disliking that turn in the conversation, but checking a reply that might have been rude had no visions of five pounds—ten pounds—loomed in the distance, Mr. Losely said,

"Pshaw! Bella, pshaw! I was a fool, I dare say, and a sad dog—a very sad dog; but I had always the greatest regard for you, and always shall! Hillo, what's that? A knock at the door! Oh, by-the-by, a queer-looking man, in a white hat, called at the same time I did, to see you on private business—gave way to me—said he should come again; may I ask who he is?"

"I can not guess; no one ever calls here on business, except the tax-gatherer."

The old woman-servant now entered. "A gentleman, ma'am—says his name is Rugge."

"Rugge—Rugge—let me think."

"I am here, Mrs. Crane," said the manager, striding in. "You don't perhaps call me to mind by name; but—oho—not gone, Sir! Do I intrude prematurely?"

"No, I have done; good-day, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"Stay, Jasper. I remember you now, Mr. Rugge; take a chair."

She whispered a few words into Losely's ear, then turned to the manager, and said aloud, "I saw you at Mr. Waife's lodging, at the time he had that bad accident."

"And I had the honor to accompany you home, ma'am, and—but shall I speak out before this gentleman?"

"Certainly; you see he is listening to you with attention. This gentleman and I have no secrets from each other. What has become of that person? This gentleman wishes to know."

LOSELY. "Yes, Sir, I wish to know—particularly."

RUGGE. "So do I; that is partly what I came about. You are aware, I think, ma'am, that I engaged him and Juliet Araminta—that is, Sophy."

LOSELY. "Sophy—engaged them, Sir—how?"

RUGGE. "Theatrical line, Sir—Rugge's Exhibition; he was a great actor once, that fellow Waife."

LOSELY. "Oh, actor!—well, Sir, go on."

Rugge (who in the course of his address turns from the lady to the gentleman, from the gentleman to the lady, with appropriate gesture and appealing look). "But he became a wreck, a block of a man; lost an eye and his voice too. However, to serve him, I took his grandchild and him too. He left me—shamefully, and ran off with his grandchild, Sir. Now, ma'am, to be plain with you, that little girl I looked upon as my property—a very valuable property. She is worth a great deal to me, and I have been done out of her. If you can help me to get her back, articled and engaged say for three years, I am willing and happy, ma'am, to pay something handsome—uncommon handsome."

Mrs. Crane (loftily). "Speak to that gentleman—*he* may treat with you."

Losely. "What do you call uncommon handsome, Mr.—Mr. Tugge?"

Rugge. "Rugge! Sir; we shan't disagree, I hope, provided you have the power to get Waife to bind the girl to me."

Losely. "I may have the power to transfer the young lady to your care; young lady is a more respectful phrase than girl; and possibly to dispense with Mr. Waife's consent to such arrangement. But excuse me if I say that I must know a little more of yourself before I could promise to exert such a power on your behalf."

Rugge. "Sir, I shall be proud to improve our acquaintance. As to Waife, the old vagabond, he has injured and affronted me, Sir. I don't bear malice, but I have a spirit—Britons have a spirit, Sir. And you will remember, ma'am, that when I accompanied you home, I observed that Mr. Waife was a mysterious man, and had apparently known better days, and that when a man is mysterious, and falls into the sear and yellow leaf, ma'am, without that which should accompany old age, Sir, one has a right to suspect that some time or other he has done something or other, ma'am, which makes him fear lest the very stones prate of his whereabouts, Sir. And you did not deny, ma'am, that the mystery was suspicious, but you said, with uncommon good sense, that it was nothing to me what Mr. Waife had once been, so long as he was of use to me at that particular season. Since then, Sir, he has ceased to be of use—ceased, too, in the unhandsomest manner. And if you would, ma'am, from a sense of justice, just unravel the mystery, put me in possession of the secret, it might make that base man of use to me again—give me a handle over him, Sir, so that I might awe him into restoring my property, as, morally speaking, Juliet Araminta most undoubtedly is. That's why I call—leaving my company, to which I am a father, orphans for the present. But I have missed that little girl—that young lady, Sir. I called her a phenomenon, ma'am—missed her much—it is natural, Sir; I appeal to you. No man can be done out of a valuable property and not feel it, if he has a heart in his bosom. And if I had her back safe, I should indulge ambition. I have always had ambition. The theatre at York, Sir—that is my ambition; I had it from a child, Sir; dreamed of it three times, ma'am. If I had back my property in that phenomenon, I would go at the thing, slap bang, take the York, and bring out the phenomenon, with *a claw!*"

Losely (musingly). "You say the young lady is a phenomenon, and for this phenomenon you are willing to pay something handsome—a vague expression. Put it into *£ s. d.*"

Rugge. "Sir, if she can be bound to me legally for three years, I would give £100. I did offer to Waife £50—to you, Sir, £100."

Losely's eyes flashed and his hands opened restlessly. "But, confound it, where is she? have you no clew?"

Rugge. "No, but we can easily find one; it was not worth my while to hunt them up before I was quite sure that, if I regained my property in that phenomenon, the law would protect it."

Mrs. Crane (moving to the door). "Well, Jasper Losely, you will sell the young lady, I doubt not; and when you have sold her, let me know." She came back and whispered, "You will not perhaps now want money from me, but I shall see you again; for, if you would find the child, you will need my aid."

"Certainly, my dear friend, I will call again; honor bright."

Mrs. Crane here bowed to the gentlemen, and swept out of the room.

Thus left alone, Losely and Rugge looked at each other with a shy and yet cunning gaze—Rugge's hands in his trowsers pockets, his head thrown back—Losely's hands involuntarily expanded, his head bewitchingly bent forward, and a little on one side.

"Sir," said Rugge at length, "what do you say to a chop and a pint of wine? Perhaps we could talk more at our ease elsewhere. I am only in town for a day—left my company thirty miles off—orphans, as I said before."

"Mr. Rugge," said Losely, "I have no desire to stay in London, or indeed in England; and the sooner we can settle this matter the better. Grant that we find the young lady, you provide for her board and lodging—teach her your honorable profession—behave, of course, kindly to her—"

"Like a father."

"And give to me the sum of £100?"

"That is, if you can legally make her over to me. But, Sir, may I inquire by what authority you would act in this matter?"

"On that head it will be easy to satisfy you; meanwhile I accept your proposal of an early dinner. Let us adjourn—is it to your house?"

"I have no exact private house in London; but I know a public one—commodious."

"Be it so. After you, Sir."

As they descended the stairs, the old woman-servant stood at the street door. Rugge went out first—the woman detained Losely.

"Do you find her altered?"

"Whom? Mrs. Crane?—why, years will tell. But you seem to have known me—I don't remember you."

"Not Bridgett Greggs?"

"Is it possible? I left you a middle-aged, rosy-faced woman. True, I recognize you now. There's a crown for you. I wish I had more to spare!"

Bridgett pushed back the silver.

"No—I dare not! Take money from you, Jasper Losely! Mistress would not forgive me!"

Losely, not unreluctantly, restored the crown to his pocket; and, with a snort, rather than sigh,

of relief, stepped into open daylight. As he crossed the street to join Rugge, who was waiting for him on the shady side, he mechanically turned to look back at the house, and, at the open window of an upper story, he beheld again those shining eyes which had glared down on him from the stairs. He tried to smile, and waved his hand feebly. The eyes seemed to return the smile; and as he walked down the street, arm in arm with the ruffian manager, slowly recovering his springy step, and in the gloss of the new garments that set forth his still symmetrical proportions, the eyes followed him watchfully—steadfastly—till his form had vanished, and the dull street was once more a solitude.

Then Arabella Crane turned from the window. Putting her hand to her heart, "How it beats!" she muttered; "if in love or in hate, in scorn or in pity, beats once more with a human emotion. He will come again—whether for money or for woman's wit, what care I—he will come. —I will hold, I will cling to him, no more to part —for better, for worse, as it should have been once at the altar. And the child?" she paused; was it in compunction? "The child!" she continued, fiercely, and as if lashing herself into rage, "The child of that treacherous, hateful mother—yes! I will help him to sell her back as a stage-show—help him in all that does not lift her to a state from which she may look down with disdain on me. Revenge on her, on that cruel house—revenge is sweet. Oh! that it were revenge alone that bids me cling to him who deserves revenge the most." She closed her burning eyes, and sat down droopingly, rocking herself to and fro like one in pain.

CHAPTER XVII.

In life it is difficult to say who do you the most mischief, enemies with the worst intentions, or friends with the best.

The conference between Mr. Rugge and Mr. Losely terminated in an appointment to meet, the next day, at the village in which this story opened. Meanwhile Mr. Rugge would return to his "orphans," and arrange performances in which, for some days, they might dispense with a Father's part. Losely, on his side, undertook to devote the intervening hours to consultation with a solicitor, to whom Mr. Rugge recommended him, as to the prompt obtaining of legal powers to enforce the authority he asserted himself to possess. He would also persuade Mrs. Crane to accompany him to the village, and aid in the requisite investigations—entertaining a tacit but instinctive belief in the superiority of her acuteness. "Set a female to catch a female," quoth Mr. Rugge.

On the day and in the place thus fixed, the three hunters opened their chase. They threw off at the cobbler's stall. They soon caught the same scent which had been followed by the lawyer's clerk. They arrived at Mrs. Saunders's—there the two men would have been at fault like their predecessor. But the female was more astute. To drop the metaphor, Mrs. Saunders could not stand the sharp cross-examination of one of her own sex. "That woman deceives us," said Mrs. Crane, on leaving the house. "They have not gone to London. What could they do there? Any man with a few stage, juggling tricks can get on in country villages, but would be lost in cities. Perhaps, as it seems he has got a dog—we have found out that from Mrs. Saunders—he will make use of it for an itinerant puppet-show."

"Punch!" said Mr. Rugge—"not a doubt of it."

"In that case," observed Mrs. Crane, "they are probably not far off. Let us print handbills, offering a reward for their clew, and luring the old man himself by an assurance that the inquiry is made in order that he may learn of something to his advantage."

In the course of the evening the handbills were printed. The next day they were posted up on the walls, not only of that village, but on those of the small towns and hamlets for some miles round. The handbills ran invitingly thus: "If William Waife, who left —— on the 20th ult., will apply at the Red Lion Inn at ——, for X. X., he will learn of something greatly to his advantage. A reward of £5 will be given to any one who will furnish information where the said William Waife, and the little girl who accompanies him, may be found. The said William Waife is about sixty years of age, of middle stature, strongly built, has lost one eye, and is lame of one leg. The little girl, called Sophy, is twelve years old, but looks younger; has blue eyes and light brown hair. They had with them a white French poodle dog. This bill is printed by the friends of the missing party." The next day passed—no information; but on the day following, a young gentleman of good mien, dressed in black, rode into the town, stopped at the Red Lion Inn, and asked to see X. X. The two men were out on their researches—Mrs. Crane staid at home to answer inquiries.

The gentleman was requested to dismount, and walk in. Mrs. Crane received him in the inn parlor, which swarmed with flies. She stood in the centre—vigilant, grim spider of the place.

"I ca-ca-call," said the gentleman, stammering fearfully, "in con-con-sequence of a b-b-bill —I—ch-chanced to see in my ri-ri-ri-ride yesterday—on a wa-wa-wall:—You—you, I—sup-sup—"

"Am X. X.," put in Mrs. Crane, growing impatient, "one of the friends of Mr. Waife, by whom the handbill has been circulated; it will indeed be a great relief to us to know where they are—the little girl more especially."

Mrs. Crane was respectably dressed—in silk, iron-gray; she had crisped her flaky tresses into stiff, hard ringlets, that fell like long screws from under a black velvet band. Mrs. Crane never wore a cap—nor could you fancy her in a cap; but the velvet band looked as rigid as if gummed to a hoop of steel. Her manner and tone of voice were those of an educated person, not unused to some society above the vulgar; and yet the visitor, in whom the reader recognizes the piscatorial Oxonian, with whom Waife had interchanged philosophy on the marge of the running brooklet, drew back as she advanced and spoke; and, bent on an errand of kindness, he was seized with a vague misgiving.

Mrs. Crane (blandly). "I fear they must be badly off. I hope they are not wanting the necessaries of life. But pray be seated, Sir."

She looked at him again, and with more respect in her address than she had before thrown into it, added, with a half courtesy, as she seated herself by his side, "A clergyman of the Established Church, I presume, Sir?"

Oxonian (stammer, as on a former occasion, respectfully omitted). "With this defect, ma'am! But to the point. Some days ago I happened to fall in with an elderly person, such as is described, with a very pretty female child, and a French dog. The man—gentleman, perhaps, I may call him, judging from his conversation—interested me much; so did the little girl. And if I could be the means of directing real friends anxious to serve them—"

Mrs. Crane. "You would indeed be a benefactor. And where are they now, Sir?"

Oxonian. "That I can not positively tell you. But before I say more, will you kindly satisfy my curiosity? He is perhaps an eccentric person—this Mr. Waife?—a little—" The Oxonian stopped, and touched his forehead. Mrs. Crane made no prompt reply—she was musing. Unwarily the scholar continued: "Because, in that case, I should not like to interfere. So many persons are shut up, where there is no insanity; but where there is property—"

Mrs. Crane. "Quite right, Sir. His friends would not interfere with his roving ways, his little whims, on any account. Poor man, why should they? No property at all for them to covet, I assure you. But it is a long story. I had the care of that dear little girl from her infancy; sweet child!"

Oxonian. "So she seems."

Mrs. Crane. "And now she has a most comfortable home provided for her; and a young girl, with good friends, ought not to be tramping about the country, whatever an old man may do. You must allow that, Sir?"

Oxonian. "Well—yes, I allow that; it occurred to me. But what *is* the man?—the gentleman?"

Mrs. Crane. "Very 'eccentric,' as you say, and inconsiderate, perhaps, as to the little girl. We will not call it insane, Sir; we can't bear to look at it in that light. But—are you married?"

Oxonian (blushing). "No, ma'am."

Mrs. Crane. "But you have a sister, perhaps?"

Oxonian. "Yes; I have one sister."

Mrs. Crane. "Would you like your sister to be running about the country in that way—carried off from her home, kindred, and friends?"

Oxonian. "Ah! I understand. The poor little girl is fond of the old man—a relation, grandfather perhaps? and he has taken her from her home; and though not actually insane, he is still—"

Mrs. Crane. "An unsafe guide for a female child, delicately reared. *I* reared her; of good prospects too. Oh, Sir, let us save the child! Look—" She drew from a side-pocket in her stiff iron-gray apron a folded paper; she placed it in the Oxonian's hand; he glanced over and returned it.

"I see, ma'am. I can not hesitate after this. It is a good many miles off where I met the persons whom I have no doubt that you seek; and two or three days ago my father received a letter from a very worthy, excellent man, with whom he is often brought into communication upon benevolent objects—a Mr. Hartopp, the Mayor of Gatesboro', in which, among other matters, the mayor mentioned briefly that the Literary Institute of that town had been much delighted by the performance of a very remarkable man with one eye, about whom there seemed some mystery, with a little girl and a learned dog; and I can't help thinking that the man, the girl, and the dog must be those whom I saw and you seek."

Mrs. Crane. "At Gatesboro'?—is that far?"

"Some way; but you can get a cross train from this village. I hope that the old man will not be separated from the little girl; they seemed very fond of each other."

"No doubt of it—very fond; it would be cruel to separate them. A comfortable home for both. I don't know, Sir, if I dare offer to a gentleman of your evident rank the reward—but for the poor of your parish."

"Oh, ma'am, our poor want for nothing. My father is rich. But if you would oblige me by a line after you have found these interesting persons—I am going to a distant part of the country to-morrow—to Montford Court, in —— shire."

Mrs. Crane. "To Lord Montfort, the head of the noble family of Vipont?"

Oxonian. "Yes. You know any of the family, ma'am? If you could refer me to one of them, I should feel more satisfied as to—"

Mrs. Crane (hastily). "Indeed, Sir, every one must know that great family by name and repute. I know no more. So you are going to Lord Montford's! The Marchioness, they say, is very beautiful!"

Oxonian. "And good as beautiful. I have the honor to be connected both with her and Lord Montfort; they are cousins, and my grandfather was a Vipont. I should have told you my name—Morley; George Vipont Morley."

Mrs. Crane made a profound courtesy, and, with an unmistakable smile of satisfaction, said, as if half in soliloquy, "So it is to one of that noble family—to a Vipont—that the dear child will owe her restoration to my embrace! Bless you, Sir!"

"I hope I have done right," said George Vipont Morley, as he mounted his horse. "I must have done right, surely!" he said, again, when he was on the high-road. "I fear I have not done right," he said, a third time, as the face of Mrs. Crane began to haunt him; and when, at sunset, he reached his home, tired out, horse and man, with an unusually long ride, and the green water-bank on which he had overheard poor Waife's simple grace and joyous babble came in sight, "After all," he said, dolefully, "it was no business of mine. I meant well, but—" His little sister ran to the gate to greet him. "Yes, I did quite right. How should I like my sister to be roving the country, and acting at Literary Institutes with a poodle dog? Quite right. Kiss me, Jane!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Let a king and a beggar converse freely together, and it is the beggar's fault if he does not say something which makes the king lift his hat to him.

The scene shifts back to Gatesboro', the fore-

noon of the day succeeding the memorable Exhibition at the Institute of that learned town. Mr. Hartopp was in the little parlor behind his country-house, his hours of business much broken into by those intruders who deem no time unseasonable for the indulgence of curiosity, the interchange of thought, or the interests of general humanity and of national enlightenment. The excitement produced on the previous evening by Mr. Chapman, Sophy, and Sir Isaac, was greatly on the increase. Persons who had seen them naturally called on the Mayor to talk over the Exhibition. Persons who had not seen them still more naturally dropped in just to learn what was really Mr. Mayor's private opinion. The little parlor was thronged by a regular levee. There was the proprietor of a dismal building, still called "The Theatre," which was seldom let except at election-time, when it was hired by the popular candidate for the delivery of those harangues upon liberty and conscience, tyranny and oppression, which furnish the staple of declamation equally to the dramatist and the orator. There was also the landlord of the Royal Hotel, who had lately built to his house "The City Concert-room"—a superb apartment, but a losing speculation. There, too, were three highly respectable persons, of a serious turn of mind, who came to suggest doubts whether an entertainment of so frivolous a nature was not injurious to the morality of Gatesboro'. Besides these notables, there were loungers and gossips, with no particular object except that of ascertaining who Mr. Chapman was by birth and parentage, and suggesting the expediency of a deputation ostensibly for the purpose of asking him to repeat his performance, but charged with private instructions to cross-examine him as to his pedigree. The gentle Mayor kept his eyes fixed on a mighty ledger-book, pen in hand. The attitude was a rebuke on intruders, and in ordinary times would have been so considered. But mildness, however majestic, is not always effective in periods of civic commotion. The room was animated by hubbub. You caught broken sentences here and there crossing each other, like the sounds that had been frozen in the air, and set free by a thaw, according to the veracious narrative of Baron Munchausen.

Play-house Proprietor. "The theatre is the—"

Serious Gentleman. "Plausible snare by which a population, at present grave and well-disposed, is decoyed into becoming—"

Excited Admirer. "A French poodle, Sir, that plays at dominoes like a—"

Credulous Conjecturer. "Benevolent philanthropist, condescending to act for the benefit of some distressed brother who is—"

Proprietor of City Concert-Room. "One hundred and twenty feet long by forty, Mr. Mayor! Talk of that damp theatre, Sir!—you might as well talk of the—"

Suddenly the door flew open, and, pushing aside a clerk who designed to announce him, in burst Mr. Chapman himself.

He had evidently expected to find the Mayor alone, for at the sight of that throng he checked himself, and stood mute at the threshold. The levee, for a moment, was no less surprised, and no less mute. But the good folks soon recovered themselves. To many it was a pleasure to accost and congratulate the man who, the night before, had occasioned to them emotions so agreeable. Cordial smiles broke out—friendly hands were thrust forth. Brief but hearty compliments, mingled with entreaties to renew the performance to a larger audience, were showered round. The Comedian stood, hat in hand, mechanically passing his sleeve over its nap, muttering, half inaudibly, "You see before you a man"—and turning his single eye from one face to the other, as if struggling to guess what was meant, or where he was. The Mayor rose and came forward. "My dear friends," said he, mildly, "Mr. Chapman calls by appointment. Perhaps he may have something to say to me confidentially."

The three serious gentlemen, who had hitherto remained aloof, eying Mr. Chapman much as three inquisitors might have eyed a Jew, shook three solemn heads, and set the example of retreat. The last to linger were the rival proprietors of the theatre and the city concert-room. Each whispered the stranger—one the left ear, one the right. Each thrust into his hand a printed paper. As the door closed on them the Comedian let fall the papers; his arm drooped to his side; his whole frame seemed to collapse. Hartopp took him by the hand, and led him gently to his own arm-chair beside the table. The Comedian dropped on the chair, still without speaking.

Mr. Hartopp. "What is the matter? What has happened?"

Waife. "She is very ill—in a bad way; the doctor says so—Dr. Gill."

Mr. Hartopp (feelingly). "Your little girl in a bad way! Oh, no. Doctors always exaggerate, in order to get more credit for the cure. Not that I would disparage Dr. Gill—fellow-townsman—first-rate man; still, 'tis the way with doctors to talk cheerfully if one is in danger, and to look solemn if there is nothing to fear."

Waife. "Do you think so—you have children of your own, Sir?—of her age, too?—Eh! eh!"

Mr. Hartopp. "Yes; I know all about children—better, I think, than Mrs. H. does. What is the complaint?"

Waife. "The doctor says it is low fever."

Mr. Hartopp. "Caused by nervous excitement, perhaps."

Waife (looking up). "Yes—that's what he says—nervous excitement."

Mr. Hartopp. "Clever, sensitive children, subjected precociously to emulation and emotion, are always liable to such maladies. My third girl, Anna Maria, fell into a low fever, caused by nervous excitement in trying for school prizes."

Waife. "Did she die of it, Sir?"

Mr. Hartopp (shuddering). "Die—No! I removed her from school—set her to take care of the poultry—forbade all French exercises, made her take English exercise instead—and ride on a donkey. She's quite another thing now—cheeks as red as an apple, and as firm as a cricket-ball."

Waife. "I will keep poultry; I will buy a donkey. Oh, Sir! you don't think she will go to heaven yet, and leave me here?"

Mr. Hartopp. "Not if you give her rest and quiet. But no excitement—no exhibitions."

Waife (emptying his pockets on the table). "Will you kindly count that money, Sir? Don't you think that would be enough to find her some pretty lodging hereabouts till she gets quite strong again? With green fields—she's fond of green fields, and a farm-yard with poultry—though we were lodging a few days ago with a good woman who kept hens, and Sophy did not seem to take to them much. A canary bird is more of a companion, and—"

Hartopp (interrupting). "Ay—ay—and you! what would you do?"

Waife. "Why, I and the dog would go away for a little while about the country."

Hartopp. "Exhibiting?"

Waife. "That money will not last forever, and what can we do—I and the dog—in order to get more for her?"

Hartopp (pressing his hand warmly). "You are a good man, Sir. I am sure of it; you can not have done things which you should be afraid to tell me. Make me your confidant, and I may then find some employment fit for you, and you need not separate yourself from your little girl."

Waife. "Separate from her! I should only leave her for a few days at a time till she gets well. This money will keep her—how long? Two months—three?—how long?—the Doctor would not charge much."

Hartopp. "You will not confide in me, then? At your age—have you no friends—no one to speak a good word for you?"

Waife (jerking up his head with a haughty air). "So—so! Who talks to you about me, Sir? I am speaking of my innocent child. Does she want a good word spoken for her? Heaven has written it in her face."

Hartopp persisted no more; the excellent man was sincerely grieved at his visitor's obstinate avoidance of the true question at issue; for the Mayor could have found employment for a man of Waife's evident education and talent. But such employment would entail responsibilities and trust. How recommend to it a man of whose life and circumstances nothing could be known—a man without a character?—And Waife interested him deeply. We have all felt that there are some persons toward whom we are attracted by a peculiar sympathy not to be explained—a something in the manner, the cut of the face, the tone of the voice. If there are fifty applicants for a benefit in our gift, one of the fifty wins his way to our preference at first sight, though with no better right to it than his fellows. We can no more say why we like the man than we can say why we fall in love with a woman in whom no one else would discover a charm. "There is," says a Latin love-poet, "no why or wherefore in liking." Hartopp, therefore, had taken, from the first moment, to Waife—the staid, respectable, thriving man, all muffled up from head to foot in the whitest lawn of reputation—to the wandering, shifty, tricksome scatterling, who had not seemingly secured, through the course of a life bordering upon age, a single certificate for good conduct. On his hearthstone, beside his ledger-book, stood the Mayor, looking with a respectful admiration that puzzled himself upon the forlorn creature, who could give no reason why he should not be rather in the Gatesboro' Parish Stocks than in its chief magistrate's easy-chair. Yet were the Mayor's sympathetic liking and respectful admiration wholly unaccountable? Runs there not between one warm human heart and another the electric chain of a secret understanding? In that maimed outcast, so stubbornly hard to himself—so tremulously sensitive for his sick child—was there not the majesty to which they who have learned that Nature has her nobles reverently bow the head! A man, true to man's grave religion, can no more despise a life wrecked in all else, while a hallowing affection stands out sublime through the rents and chinks of fortune, than he can profane with rude mockery a temple in ruins—if still left there the altar.

CHAPTER XIX.

Very well so far as it goes.

Mr. Hartopp. "I can not presume to question you further, Mr. Chapman. But to one of your knowledge of the world, I need not say that your silence deprives me of the power to assist yourself. We'll talk no more of that."

Waife. "Thank you gratefully, Mr. Mayor."

Mr. Hartopp. "But for the little girl, make your mind easy—at least for the present. I will place her at my farm cottage. My bailiff's wife, a kind woman, will take care of her, while you pursue your calling elsewhere. As for this money, you will want it yourself; your poor little child shall cost you nothing. So that's settled. Let me come up and see her. I am a bit of a doctor myself. Every man blessed with a large family, in whose house there is always some interesting case of small-pox, measles, hooping-cough, scarlatina, etc., has a good private practice of his own. I'm not brilliant in book-learning, Mr. Chapman, but as to children's complaints in a practical way" (added Hartopp, with a glow of pride), "Mrs. H. says she'd rather trust the little ones to me than Dr. Gill. I'll see your child, and set her up, I'll be bound. But now I think of it," continued Hartopp, softening more and more, "if exhibit you must, why not stay at Gatesboro' for a time? More may be made in this town than elsewhere."

"No, no; I could not have the heart to act here again without her. I feel at present as if I can never again act at all! Something else will turn up. Providence is so kind to me, Mr. Mayor."

Waife turned to the door—"You will come soon?" he said, anxiously.

The Mayor, who had been locking up his ledgers and papers, replied, "I will but stay to give some orders; in a quarter of an hour I shall be at your hotel."

CHAPTER XX.

Sophy hides heart and shows temper.

Sophy was lying on a sofa drawn near the window in her own room, and on her lap was

the doll Lionel had given to her. Carried with her in her wanderings, she had never played with it; never altered a ribbon in its yellow tresses; but at least once a day she had taken it forth and looked at it in secret. And all that morning, left much to herself, it had been her companion. She was smoothing down its frock, which she fancied had got ruffled—smoothing it down with a sort of fearful tenderness, the doll all the while staring her full in the face with its blue bead eyes. Waife, seated near her, was trying to talk gayly; to invent fairy tales blithe with sport and fancy, but his invention flagged, and the fairies prosed awfully. He had placed the dominoes before Sir Isaac, but Sophy had scarcely looked at them, from the languid, heavy eyes on which the doll so stupidly fixed its own. Sir Isaac himself seemed spiritless; he was aware that something was wrong. Now and then he got up restlessly, sniffed the dominoes, and placed a paw gently, very gently, on Sophy's knee. Not being encouraged, he lay down again uneasily, often shifting his position as if the floor was grown too hard for him. Thus the Mayor found the three. He approached Sophy with the step of a man accustomed to sick rooms and ailing children—step light as if shod with felt—put his hand on her shoulder, kissed her forehead, and then took the doll. Sophy started, and took it back from him quickly, but without a word; then she hid it behind her pillow. The Mayor smiled—"My dear child, do you think I should hurt your doll?"

Sophy colored, and said murmuringly, "No, Sir, not hurt it, but—" she stopped short.

"I have been talking to your grandpapa about you, my dear, and we both wish to give you a little holiday. Dolls are well enough for the winter, but green fields and daisy-chains for the summer."

Sophy glanced from the Mayor to her grandfather, and back again to the Mayor, shook her curls from her eyes and looked seriously inquisitive.

The Mayor, observing her quietly, stole her hand into his own, feeling the pulse as if merely caressing the tender wrist. Then he began to describe his bailiff's cottage, with woodbine round the porch, the farm-yard, the bee-hives, the pretty duck-pond with an osier island, and the great China gander who had a pompous strut, which made him the drollest creature possible. And Sophy should go there in a day or two, and be as happy as one of the bees, but not so busy.

Sophy listened very earnestly, very gravely, and then sliding her hand from the Mayor, caught hold of her grandfather's arm firmly, and said, "And you, Grandy—will you like it? won't it be dull for you, Grandy, dear?"

"Why, my darling," said Waife, "I and Sir Isaac will go and take a stroll about the country for a few weeks, and—"

Sophy (passionately). "I thought so; I thought he meant that. I tried not to believe it; go away—you? and who's to take care of you? who'll understand you? I want care! I—I! No, no; it is you—you who want care. I shall be well to-morrow—quite well, don't fear. He shall not be sent away from me; he shall not, Sir. Oh, grandfather, grandfather, how could you?" She flung herself on his breast, clinging there, clinging as if infancy and age were but parts of the same whole.

"But," said the Mayor, "it is not as if you were going to school, my dear; you are going for a holiday. And your grandfather must leave you—must travel about—'tis his calling. If you fell ill and were with him, think how much you would be in his way. Do you know," he added, smiling, "I shall begin to fear that you are selfish."

"Selfish!" exclaimed Waife, angrily.

"Selfish!" echoed Sophy, with a melancholy scorn that came from a sentiment so deep that mortal eye could scarce fathom it. "Oh, no, Sir! can you say it is for *his* good, not for, what he supposes, mine, that you want us to part? The pretty cottage—and all for me—and what for him?—tramp, tramp along the hot, dusty roads. Do you see that he is lame? Oh, Sir, I know him—you don't. Selfish! he would have no merry ways that make you laugh without me; would you, Grandy, dear? Go away, you are a naughty man—go, or I shall hate you as much as that dreadful Mr. Rugge."

"Rugge—who is he?" said the Mayor, curiously, catching at any clew.

"Hush, my darling!—hush!" said Waife, fondling her on his breast. "Hush! What is to be done, Sir?"

Hartopp made a sly sign to him to say no more before Sophy, and then replied, addressing himself to her—

"What is to be done? Nothing shall be done, my dear child, that you dislike. I don't wish to part you two. Don't hate me—lie down again—that's a dear. There, I have smoothed your pillow for you; oh, here's your pretty doll again."

Sophy snatched at the doll petulantly, and made what the French call a *moue* at the good man, as she suffered her grandfather to replace her on the sofa.

"She has a strong temper of her own," muttered the Mayor; "so has Anna Maria a strong temper!"

Now, if I were anyway master of my own pen, and could write as I pleased, without being hurried along, helter-skelter, by the tyrannical exactions of that "young Rapid" in buskins and chiton, called "The Historic Muse," I would break off this chapter, open my window, rest my eyes on the green lawn without, and indulge in a rhapsodical digression upon that beautifier of the moral life, which is called "Good Temper." Ha!—the Historic Muse is dozing. By her leave!—Softly.

CHAPTER XXI.

Being an Essay on Temper in general, and a hazardous experiment on the reader's in particular.

There, the window is open! how instinctively the eye rests upon the green! how the calm color lures and soothes it! But is there to the green only a single hue? See how infinite the variety of its tints! What sombre gravity in yon cedar, yon motionless pine-tree! What lively but unvarying laugh in yon glossy laurels! Do those tints charm us like the play in the young leaves of the lilac—lighter here, darker

there, as the breeze (and so slight the breeze!) stirs them into checker—into ripple? Oh sweet green, to the world what sweet temper is to man's life! Who would reduce into one dye all thy lovely varieties? who exclude the dark steadfast verdure that lives on through the winter day; or the mutinous caprice of the gentler, younger tint that came fresh through the tears of April, and will shadow with sportive tremor the blooms of luxuriant June?

Happy the man on whose marriage-hearth temper smiles kind from the eyes of woman! "No deity present," saith the heathen proverb, "where absent—Prudence"—no joy long a guest where Peace is not a dweller. Peace, so like Faith, that they may be taken for each other, and poets have clad them with the same vail. But in childhood, in early youth, expect not the changeless green of the cedar. Wouldst thou distinguish fine temper from spiritless dullness, from cold simulation—ask less what the temper, than what the disposition.

Is the nature sweet and trustful, is it free from the morbid self-love which calls itself "sensitive feeling," and frets at imaginary offenses; is the tendency to be grateful for kindness—yet take kindness meekly, and accept as a benefit what the vain call a due? From dispositions thus blessed, sweet temper will come forth to gladden thee, spontaneous and free. Quick with some, with some slow, word and look emerge out of the heart. Be thy first question, "Is the heart itself generous and tender?" If it be so, self-control comes with deepening affection. Call not that a good heart which, hastening to sting if a fibre be ruffled, cries, "I am no hypocrite." Accept that excuse, and revenge becomes virtue. But where the heart, if it give the offense, pines till it win back the pardon; if offended itself, bounds forth to forgive, ever longing to soothe, ever grieved if it wound; then be sure that its nobleness will need but few trials of pain in each outbreak, to refine and chastise its expression. Fear not then; be but noble thyself, thou art safe!

Yet what in childhood is often called, rebukingly, "temper," is but the cordial and puissant vitality which contains all the elements that make temper the sweetest at last. Who among us, how wise soever, can construe a child's heart? who conjecture all the springs that secretly vibrate within, to a touch on the surface of feeling? Each child, but especially the girl-child, would task the whole lore of a sage, deep as Shakspeare, to distinguish those subtle emotions which we grown folks have outlived.

"She has a strong temper," said the Mayor, when Sophy snatched the doll from his hand a second time, and pouted at him, spoiled child, looking so divinely cross, so petulantly pretty. And how on earth could the Mayor know what associations with that stupid doll made her think it profaned by the touch of a stranger? Was it to her eyes as to his—mere wax-work and frippery, or a symbol of holy remembrances, of gleams into a fairer world, of "devotion to something afar from the sphere of her sorrow?" Was not the evidence of "strong temper" the very sign of affectionate depth of heart? Poor little Sophy. Hide it again—safe out of sight—close, inscrutable, unguessed, as childhood's first treasures of sentiment ever are!

CHAPTER XXII.

The object of Civilization being always to settle people one way or the other, the Mayor of Gatesboro' entertains a statesmanlike ambition to settle Gentleman Waife: no doubt a wise conception, and in accordance with the genius of the Nation.—Every Session of Parliament, England is employed in settling folks, whether at home or at the Antipodes, who ignorantly object to be settled in her way; in short, "I'll settle them," has become a vulgar idiom, tantamount to a threat of uttermost extermination or smash.—Therefore the Mayor of Gatesboro', harboring that benignant idea with reference to "Gentleman Waife," all kindly readers will exclaim, "Dii, Meliora! What will he do with it?"

The doll once more safe behind the pillow, Sophy's face gradually softened; she bent forward, touched the Mayor's hand timidly, and looked at him with pleading, penitent eyes, still wet with tears—eyes that said, though the lips were silent—"I'll not hate you. I was ungrateful and peevish; may I beg pardon?"

"I forgive you with all my heart," cried the Mayor, interpreting the look aright. "And now try and compose yourself and sleep while I talk with your grandpapa below."

"I don't see how it is possible that I can leave her," said Waife, when the two men had adjourned to the sitting-room.

"I am sure," quoth the Mayor, seriously, "that it is the best thing for her; her pulse has much nervous excitability; she wants a complete rest; she ought not to move about with you on any account. But come—though I must not know, it seems, who and what you are, Mr. Chapman—I don't think you will run off with my cows, and if you like to stay at the Bailiff's Cottage for a week or two with your grandchild, you shall be left in peace, and asked no questions. I will own to you a weakness of mine—I value myself on being seldom or never taken in. I don't think I could forgive the man who did take me in. But taken in I certainly shall be, if, despite all your mystery, you are not as honest a fellow as ever stood upon shoe-leather! So come to the cottage."

Waife was very much affected by this confiding kindness; but he shook his head despondently, and that same abject, almost cringing humility of mien and manner which had pained, at times, Lionel and Vance, crept over the whole man, so that he seemed to cower and shrink as a Pariah before a Brahman. "No, Sir; thank you most humbly. No, Sir—that must not be. I must work for my daily bread, if what a poor vagabond like me may do can be called work. I have made it a rule for years not to force myself to the hearth and home of any kind man, who, not knowing my past, has a right to suspect me. Where I lodge, I pay as a lodger; or whatever favor shown me spares my purse, I try to return in some useful, humble way. Why, Sir, how could I make free and easy with another man's board and roof-tree for days or weeks together, when I would not even come to your hearthstone for a cup of tea?" The Mayor remembered, and was startled. Waife hurried on. "But for my poor child I have no such scruples—no shame, no false pride. I take what you offer her gratefully—gratefully. Ah, Sir, she is not in her right place with me; but there's no kicking against the pricks. Where was I? Oh! well, I tell you what we will do, Sir. I will take her to the Cottage in a day or two—as soon as she is well enough to go—and

spend the day with her, and deceive her, Sir! yes, deceive, cheat her, Sir! I am a cheat—a player—and she'll think I'm going to stay with her; and at night, when she's asleep, I'll creep off, I and the other dog. But I'll leave a letter for her—it will soothe her, and she'll be patient and wait. I will come back again to see her in a week, and once every week till she's well again."

"And what will you do?"

"I don't know"—but, said the actor, forcing a laugh—"I'm not a man likely to starve. Oh, never fear, Sir!"

So the Mayor went away, and strolled across the fields to his Bailiff's cottage, to prepare for the guest it would receive.

"It is all very well that the poor man should be away for some days," thought Mr. Hartopp. "Before he comes again, I shall have hit on some plan to serve him; and I can learn more about him from the child in his absence, and see what he is really fit for. There's a schoolmaster wanted in Morley's village. Old Morley wrote to me to recommend him one. Good salary—pretty house. But it would be wrong to set over young children—recommend to a respectable proprietor and his parson—a man whom I know nothing about. Impossible! that will not do. If there was any place of light service which did not require trust or responsibility—but there is no such place in Great Britain. Suppose I were to set him up in some easy way of business—a little shop, eh? I don't know. What would Williams say? If, indeed, I were taken in!—if the man I am thus credulously trusting turned out a rogue"—the Mayor paused and actually shivered at that thought—"why then, I should be fallen indeed. My wife would not let me have half-a-crown in my pockets; and I could not walk a hundred yards but Williams would be at my heels to protect me from being stolen by gipsies. Taken in by him! No, impossible! But if it turn out as I suspect—that contrary to vulgar prudence, I am divining a really great and good man in difficulties—Aha, what a triumph I shall then gain over them all. How Williams will revere me!" The good man laughed aloud at that thought, and walked on with a prouder step.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A pretty trifle in its way, no doubt, is the love between youth and youth—Gay varieties of the bauble spread the counter of the Great Toy-Shop—But thou, courteous Dame Nature, raise thine arm to yon shelf, somewhat out of everyday reach, and bring me down that obsolete, neglected, unconsidered thing, the Love between Age and Childhood.

The next day Sophy was better—the day after, improvement was more visible—and on the third day Waife paid his bill, and conducted her to the rural abode to which, credulous at last of his promises to share it with her for a time, he enticed her fated steps. It was little more than a mile beyond the suburbs of the town, and though the walk tired her, she concealed fatigue, and would not suffer him to carry her. The cottage now smiled out before them—thatched gable roof, with fancy barge board—half Swiss, half what is called Elizabethan—all the fences and sheds round it, as only your rich traders, condescending to turn farmers, construct and maintain—sheds and fences, trim and neat, as if models in wax-work. The breezy air came fresh from the new haystacks—from the woodbine round the porch—from the breath of the lazy kine, as they stood knee-deep in the pool, that, belted with weeds and broad-leaved water-lilies, lay calm and gleaming amidst level pastures.

Involuntarily they arrested their steps, to gaze on the cheerful landscape and inhale the balmy air. Meanwhile the Mayor came out from the cottage porch, his wife leaning on his arm, and two of his younger children bounding on before, with joyous faces, giving chase to a gaudy butterfly which they had started from the woodbine.

Mrs. Hartopp had conceived a lively curiosity to see and judge for herself of the objects of her liege lord's benevolent interest. She shared, of course, the anxiety which formed the standing excitement of all those who lived but for one godlike purpose—that of preserving Josiah Hartopp from being taken in. But whenever the Mayor specially wished to secure his wife's countenance to any pet project of his own, and convince her either that he was not taken in, or that to be discreetly taken in is, in this world, a very popular and sure mode of getting up, he never failed to attain his end. That man was the cunningest creature! As full of wiles and stratagems in order to get his own way—in benevolent objects—as men who set up to be clever are for selfish ones. Mrs. Hartopp was certainly a good woman, but a *made* good woman. Married to another man, I suspect that she would have been a shrew. Petruchio would have tamed her, I'll swear. But she, poor lady, had been gradually, but completely subdued, subjugated, absolutely cowed beneath the weight of her spouse's despotic mildness; for in Hartopp there *was* a weight of soft quietude, of placid oppression, wholly irresistible. It would have buried a Titaness under a Pelion of moral feather-beds. Mass upon mass of downy influence descended upon you, seemingly yielding as it fell, enveloping, overbearing, stifling you; not presenting a single hard point of contact; giving in as you pushed against it; suppleing itself seductively round you, softer and softer, heavier and heavier, till, I assure you, ma'am, no matter how high your natural wifely spirit, you would have had it smothered out of you, your last rebellious murmur dying languidly away under the descending fleeces.

"So kind in you to come with me, Mary," said Hartopp. "I could not have been happy without your approval: look at the child—something about her like Mary Anne, and Mary Anne is the picture of you!"

Waife advanced, uncovering; the two children, having lost trace of the butterfly, had run up toward Sophy. But her shy look made themselves shy—shyness is so contagious—and they stood a little aloof, gazing at her. Sir Isaac stalked direct to the Mayor, sniffed at him, and wagged his tail.

Mrs. Hartopp now bent over Sophy, and acknowledging that the face was singularly pretty, glanced graciously toward her husband, and said, "I see the likeness!" then to Sophy, "I fear you are tired, my dear; you must not overfatigue yourself—and you must take milk fresh

well worth all the stage, I should not dislike acting. Oh, grandfather, where that kind gentleman and his lady and those merry children come to and speak to us, don't you feel ready to creep into the earth?—I do. Are we talking truth? Are we living truth? not name to-day, anything or name to-morrow? I should not mind acting on a stage or in a room, for the time, but always acting, always — no character 'make-believe'? Grandfather, must that be? They don't do it. I mean by they, all who are good, and do it. I mean by they, all who are good, and looked up to, and respected, as — as — oh, Granny—Granny—what am I saying? I have grieved you."

Wattie looked was striving hard to keep down emotion; but his lips were sore firmly and the blood had left them, and his hands were trembling.

"We must take ourselves," he said in a very low voice, "we must take false names—I—because of reasons I can't tell even to you—and you, because I failed to get you a proper home, where you ought to be; and there a man who, if he pleases, and he may please it any day, could take you away from me, if he found you out—and so—and we." He paused abruptly, looked at her fearful wondering silence, and rising, drew himself up with one of those rare outbreaks of dignity which elevated the whole character of his person. "But as for me," said he, "if I have lost all name—if while I live, I must be this wandering, skulking outcast—look above, Nephy—look up above, there is where will be known—all hearts read—and I have my best hope to find a place to which I may earn your coming to, in what has but as a birthright here. Not to exalt myself do I say this—nor; but that you may have comfort, darling, if ever hereafter you are pressed by what you say to you of me."

As he spoke, the expression of his face, at first tender and lofty, relaxed into melancholy submission. Then passing his arm once more, and resting on it as if weak once more, into the broken cripple needing her full support, he drew her back from the grave and paced the little garden slowly, painfully. At length he seemed to recover himself, and said in his ordinary cheerful tone, "But to the point in question, suppose we were done with acting and roaming, and kept one penny, and settle somewhere like plain folks, again I ask—how shall we live?"

"I have been thinking of that," answered Nephy. "You remember that those good Miss Horns taught me all kinds of needle-work, and I know people can make money by needle-work and things. Granny dear, what can't you do? Don't you forget Mrs. Saunders's books that you bound, and her caps and trimmers that you mended? So we would both work, and have a little cottage and a garden, that we could take care of, and sell the herbs and vegetables. Oh, I have thought over it all, the last fortnight, a hundred hundred times, only I did not dare to speak first."

Wattie listened very attentively. "I can make very good baskets," said he, rubbing his chin, "narrow baskets (if one could hire a bit of osier ground), and as you say, there might be other easy articles I could turn out pretty enough, if you could work samplers, and urn-rugs, and cyphers, and pin-cushions, and so forth; and that with a rood or two of garden ground, and poultry (the Mayor says poultry is healthy for children), upon my word, if we could find a safe place, and people would not trouble us with their croup—and we could save a little money for you when I am—"

"Don't—don't," interrupted Nephy, growing more and more interested and excited.

"Yes, hem—certainly. A cottage of that kind in a village would not be above £8 a year, and £20 spent on materials for fancy-work would set us up. Ah! but furniture—beds and tables—numerous dear."

"Oh no, very little would do at first."

"Let us count the money we have left," said Wattie, throwing himself down at a point of sward that encircled a shady mulberry tree. Old man and child counted the money, bit by bit, gayly yet anxiously—building, interrupting each other—advising upon columns; they forgot past and present as much as to nothing years—they were absorbed in the future—innocent delightful future—present as the future planned by two infants from Robinson Crusoe or fairy tales.

"I remember—I remember; just the place for us," cried Wattie, suddenly. "It is many, many years since I was there; I was quite a boy, and I thought then"—just the place, near a large town, but in a pretty village quite retired from it. "There there I learned to make baskets. I had broken my leg—fell from a horse—and while I helped work at an old basket-maker, who had a capital trade. Under at the back of his house, cosie, sunny, plentiful. I see them now as I see them from my little chamber, while my leg was setting. And Lizzy used to write to me such dear letters; my baskets were good for her. We had baskets enough to have furnished a house with baskets; could have dined off baskets, sat in baskets, slept in baskets. We in a few lessons I could soon recover the knack of the work. I should like to see the place again; it would be shaking hands with my youth once more. Name, who could possibly recognise me? could be sure living. Sure no one but the old man, the basket-maker, and his wife, all so old now, they must be long since gathered to their fathers. Perhaps no one carries on the basket trade now. I may revive it and have it all to myself; perhaps six cottages (if may be so selfish) perhaps six cottages (if may be so selfish)." Then, ever eloquent to be sanguine, Wattie rapidly chattered on, Nephy listening with sparkling and smiling up to his face. "And a river hard by, park close by; the owners great lords, absent in town; perhaps it is deserted still. You may wander over it as if it were your own. Such wonderful trees—such green walks—such and pretty sky lanes running across the valleys—stately door too! We will make friends with the lodge-keepers, and we will call the place Nephy; and I shall be a genius who weaves magical baskets, and you shall be the enchanted princess concealed from all evil eyes, hidden in bowers of pearl under leaves of emerald, and catching no sound from the world of perfidy and strife, except as the boughs whisper and the birds sing."

"Dear me, here you are—we thought you were lost," said the landlady's wife; "tea is waiting for you, and there's husband. Sir, coming from his work; he'll be pound and glad to know

you, Sir, and you too, my dear; we have no children of our own."

It is past eleven. Sophy, worn out, but with emotions far more pleasurable than she had long known, is fast asleep. Waife kneels by her side, looking at her. He touches her hand, so cool and soft—all fever gone; he rises on tiptoe—he bends over her forehead—a kiss there, and a tear; he steals away, down, down the stairs. At the porch is the bailiff, holding Sir Isaac.

"We'll take all care of her," said Mr. Gooch. "You'll not know her again when you come back."

Waife pressed the hand of his grandchild's host, but did not speak.

"You are sure you will find your way—no, that's the wrong turn—straight on to the town. They'll be sitting up for you at the Saracen's Head, I suppose; of course, Sir? It seems not hospitable like, your going away at the dead of night thus. But I understand you don't like crying, Sir—we men don't; and your sweet little girl, I dare say, would sob, ready to break her heart, if she knew. Fine moonlight night, Sir—straight on. And I say, don't fret about her; wife loves children dearly—so do I. Good-night."

On went Waife—lamely, slowly—Sir Isaac's white coat gleaming in the moon, ghost-like. On he went, bundle strapped across his shoulder, leaning on his staff, along by the folded sheep and the sleeping cattle. But when he got into the high road, Gatesboro' fall before him, with all its roofs and spires, he turned his back on the town, and tramped once more along the desert thoroughfare—more slowly, and more; more lamely, and more; till several mile-stones were passed; and then he crept through the gap of a hedgerow, to the sheltering eaves of a hay-stack; and under that roof-tree he and Sir Isaac lay down to rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Laugh at forebodings of evil, but tremble after day-dreams of happiness.

Waife left behind him at the cottage two letters—one intrusted to the bailiff, with a sealed bag, for Mr. Hartopp—one for Sophy, placed on a chair beside her bed.

The first letter was as follows:

"I trust, dear and honored Sir, that I shall come back safely; and when I do, I may have found, perhaps, a home for her, and some way of life such as you would not blame. But, in case of accident, I have left with Mr. Gooch, sealed up, the money we made at Gatesboro', after paying the inn bill, doctor, etc., and retaining the mere trifle I need in case I and Sir Isaac fail to support ourselves. You will kindly take care of it. I should not feel safe with more money about me, an old man. I might be robbed; besides, I am careless. I never can keep money; it slips out of my hands like an eel. Heaven bless you, Sir; your kindness seems like a miracle vouchsafed to me for that child's dear sake. No evil can chance to her with you; and if I should fall ill and die, even then you, who would have aided the tricksome vagrant, will not grudge the saving hand [illegible] harmless child."

The letter to Sophy ran thus:

"Darling, forgive me; I have stolen [illegible] from you, but only for a few days, and o[illegible] order to see if we can not gain the magic [illegible] where I am to be the Genius, and you the [illegible] cess. I go forth with such a light heart, [illegible] dear. I shall be walking thirty miles a[illegible] and not feel an ache in the lame leg; you [illegible] not keep up with me—you know you cool[illegible] So think over the cottage and the basket [illegible] and practice at samplers and pin-cushions [illegible] it is too hot to play; and be stout and [illegible] against I come back. That, I trust, will b[illegible] day week—'tis but seven days; and then w[illegible] only act fairy dramas to nodding trees, wit[illegible] nets for the orchestra; and even Sir Isaac [illegible] not be demeaned by mercenary tricks, but [illegible] employ his arithmetical talents in casting [illegible] weekly bills, and he shall never stand [illegible] hind legs except on sunny days, when he [illegible] carry a parasol to shade an enchanted pri[illegible] Laugh, darling—let me fancy I see you l[illegible] ing; but don't fret—don't fancy I desert [illegible] Do try and get well—quite, quite well; I [illegible] of you on my knees."

The letter and the bag were taken ov[illegible] sunrise, to Mr. Hartopp's villa. Mr. Ha[illegible] was an early man. Sophy overslept he[illegible] her room was to the west; the morning b[illegible] did not reach its windows; and the co[illegible] without children woke up to labor, noiseles[illegible] still. So when at last she shook off sleep, [illegible] tossing her hair from her blue eyes, looked r[illegible] and became conscious of the strange place [illegible] still fancied the hour early. But she go[illegible] drew the curtain from the window, saw the [illegible] high in the heavens, and, ashamed of her [illegible] ness, turned, and lo! the letter on the c[illegible] Her heart at once misgave her; the truth f[illegible] ed upon a reason prematurely quick in th[illegible] tuition which belongs to the union of sen[illegible] affection and active thought. She drew a [illegible] breath, and turned deadly pale. It was [illegible] minutes before she could take up the letter [illegible] fore she could break the seal. When she [illegible] she read on noiselessly, her tears dropping [illegible] the page, without effort or sob. She ha[illegible] egotistical sorrow, no grief in being left a[illegible] with strangers; it was the pathos of the [illegible] man's lonely wanderings, of his bereavem[illegible] of his counterfeit glee, and genuine self-s[illegible] fice—this it was that suffused her whole [illegible] with unutterable yearnings of tenderness, g[illegible] tude, pity, veneration. But when she had [illegible] silently for some time, she kissed the letter [illegible] devout passion, and turned to that Heave[illegible] which the outcast had taught her first to pr[illegible]

Afterward she stood still, musing a little w[illegible] and the sorrowful shade gradually left her f[illegible] Yes; she would obey him—she would not [illegible] —she would try and get well and strong. [illegible] would feel, at the distance, that she was tru[illegible] his wishes—that she was fitting herself t[illegible] again his companion; seven days would s[illegible] pass. Hope, that can never long quit the h[illegible] of childhood, brightened over her meditati[illegible] as the morning sun over a landscape that, [illegible] before, had lain sad amidst twilight and u[illegible] rains.

When she came down stairs Mrs. Gooch was pleased and surprised to observe the placid smile upon her face, and the quiet activity with which, after the morning meal, she moved about by the good woman's side, assisting her in her dairy-work and other housewife tasks, talking little, comprehending quickly—composed, cheerful.

"I am so glad to see you don't pine after your good grandpapa, as we feared you would."

"He told me not to pine," answered Sophy, simply, but with a quivering lip.

When the noon deepened, and it became too warm for exercise, Sophy timidly asked if Mrs. Gooch had any worsteds and knitting-needles, and being accommodated with those implements and materials, she withdrew to the arbor, and seated herself to work—solitary and tranquil.

What made, perhaps, the chief strength in this poor child's nature, was its intense trustfulness—a part, perhaps, of its instinctive appreciation of truth. She trusted in Waife—in the Future—in Providence—in her own childish, not helpless, self. Already, as her slight fingers sorted the worsteds, and her graceful taste shaded their hues into blended harmony, her mind was weaving, not less harmoniously, the hues in the woof of dreams: the cottage home—the harmless tasks—Waife, with his pipe, in the arm-chair, under some porch, covered, like that one yonder—why not?—with fragrant wood-bine. And life, if humble, honest, manful, not shrinking from the day, so that, if Lionel met her again, she should not blush, nor he be shocked. And if their ways were so different as her grandfather said, still they might cross, as they had crossed before, and—the work sank from her hand, the sweet lips parted, smiling; a picture came before her eyes—her grandfather, Lionel, herself; all three, friends, and happy; a stream, fair as the Thames had seemed—green trees and bathed in summer—the boat gliding by: in that boat they three, borne softly on—away—away—what matters whither? by her side the old man facing her, the boy's bright, kind eyes. She started. She heard noises—a swinging gate—footsteps. She started—she rose—voices: one strange to her, a man's voice, then the Mayor's. A third voice, shrill, stern: a terrible voice—heard in infancy—associated with images of cruelty, misery, woe. It could not be!—impossible! Near—nearer came the footsteps. Seized with the impulse of flight, she sprang to the mouth of the arbor. Frowning her glared two dark, baleful eyes. She stood—arrested—spell-bound—as a bird fixed rigid by the gaze of a serpent.

"Yes, Mr. Mayor; all right! it is our little girl—our dear Sophy. This way, Mr. Losely. Such a pleasant surprise for you, Sophy, my love!" said Mrs. Crane.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

In the kindliest natures there is a certain sensitiveness, which, when wounded, occasions the same pain, and bequeathes the same resentment, as mortified vanity or galled self-love.

It is exactly that day week, toward the hour of five in the evening: Mr. Hartopp, alone in the parlor behind his warehouse, is locking up his books and ledgers preparatory to the return to his villa. There is a certain change in the expression of his countenance since we saw it last. If it be possible for Mr. Hartopp to look sullen—sullen he looks; if it be possible for the Mayor of Garesboro to be crest-fallen—crest-fallen he is. That smooth existence has surely received some fatal concussion, and has not yet recovered the shock. But, if you will glance beyond the parlor at Mr. Williams giving orders in the warehouse, at the warehousemen themselves, at the rough faces in the tan-yard—nay, at Mike Callaghan, who has just brought a parcel from the railway, all of them have evidently shared in the effects of the concussion; all of them wear a look more or less sullen; all seem crest-fallen. Nay, could you carry your gaze farther on—could you peep into the shops in the High Street, or at the loungers in the city reading-room; could you extend the vision farther still—to Mr. Hartopp's villa, behold his wife, his little ones, his men-servants, and his maid-servants—more and more impressively general would become the tokens of disturbance occasioned by that infamous concussion. Every where a sullen look—every where that inimitable aspect of crest-fallenness! What can have happened to the good man bankrupt? No—rich as ever. What can it be? Reader, that fatal event which they who love Josiah Hartopp are ever at watch to prevent, despite all their vigilance, has occurred. Josiah Hartopp has been TAKEN IN! Other men may be occasionally taken in, and no one mourns—perhaps they deserve it if they are not especially benevolent, or they set up to be specially wise. But to take in that Lamb! And it was not only the Mayor's heart that was wounded, but his pride, his self-esteem, his sense of dignity, were terribly lacerated. For as we know, though all the world considered Mr. Hartopp the very man born to be taken in, and therefore ordained to protect him, yet in his secret soul Mr. Hartopp considered that no man less needed such protection; that he was never taken in, unless he meant to be so. Thus the cruelty and ingratitude of the base action under which his crest was so fallen, jarred on his whole system. Nay, more, he could not but feel that the event would long affect his personal comfort and independence; he would be more than ever under the affectionate tyranny of Mr. Williams—more than ever be an object of universal surveillance and espionage. There would be one thought paramount throughout Garesboro'. "The Mayor, God bless him! has been taken in—this must not occur again! or Garesboro' is dishonored,

and Virtue indeed a name!" Mr. Hartopp felt not only mortified but subjugated—he who had hitherto been the soft subjugator of the hardest. He felt not only subjugated, but indignant at the consciousness of being so. He was too meekly convinced of Heaven's unerring justice not to feel assured that the man who had taken him in would come to a tragic end. He would not have hanged that man with his own hands—he was too mild for vengeance. But if he had seen that man hanging, he would have said, piously, "Fitting retribution!" and passed on his way soothed and comforted. Taken in!—taken in at last!—he, Josiah Hartopp, taken in by a fellow with one eye!

CHAPTER II.

The Mayor is so protected that he can not help himself

A commotion without—a kind of howl—a kind of hoot. Mr. Williams—the warehousemen, the tanners, Mike Callaghan, share between them the howl and the hoot. The Mayor started—is it possible! His door is burst open, and, scattering all who sought to hold him back—scattering them to the right and left from his massive torso, in rushed the man who had taken in the Mayor—the fellow with one eye, and with that fellow, shaggy and travel-soiled, the other dog!

"What have you done with the charge I intrusted to you? My child—my child—where is she?"

Waife's face was wild with the agony of his emotions, and his voice was so sharply terrible that it went like a knife into the heart of the men, who, thrust aside for the moment, now followed him, fearful, into the room.

"Mr. — Mr. Chapman, Sir," faltered the Mayor, striving hard to recover dignity and self-possession, "I am astonished at your—your—"

"Audacity!" interposed Mr. Williams.

"My child—my Sophy—my child! answer me, man!"

"Sir," said the Mayor, drawing himself up, "have you not got the note which I left at my bailiff's cottage in case you called there?"

"Your note—this thing!" said Waife, striking a crumpled paper with his hand, and running his eye over its contents. "You have rendered up, you say, the child to her lawful protector? Gracious Heavens! did *I* trust her to you or not?"

"Leave the room all of you," said the Mayor, with a sudden return of his usual calm vigor.

"You go—you, Sirs; what the deuce do you do here?" growled Williams to the meaner throng. "Out!—I stay; never fear, men, I'll take care of him!"

The by-standers surlily slinked off, but none returned to their work; they stood within reach of call by the shut door. Williams tucked up his coat-sleeves, clenched his fists, hung his head doggedly on one side, and looked altogether so pugnacious and minatory, that Sir Isaac, who, though in a state of great excitement, had hitherto retained self-control, peered at him under his curls, stiffened his back, showed his teeth, and growled formidably.

"My good Williams, leave us," said the Mayor; "I would be alone with this person."

"Alone—you! out of the question. Now you have been once taken in, and you own it—it is my duty to protect you henceforth; and I will to the end of my days."

The Mayor sighed heavily—"Well, Williams, well!—take a chair, and be quiet. Now, Mr. Chapman, so to call you still; you have deceived me."

"I—how?"

The Mayor was puzzled. "Deceived me," he said at last, "in my knowledge of human nature. I thought you an honest man, Sir. And you are—but no matter."

Waife (impatiently). "My child, my child! you have given her up—to—to—"

Mayor. "Her own father, Sir."

Waife (echoing the words as he staggers back). "I thought so—I thought it!"

Mayor. "In so doing I obeyed the law—he had legal power to enforce his demand." The Mayor's voice was almost apologetic in its tone, for he was affected by Waife's anguish, and not able to silence a pang of remorse. After all, he had been trusted; and he had, excusably perhaps, necessarily perhaps, but still he *had* failed to fulfill the trust. "But," added the Mayor, as if reassuring himself—"But I refused at first to give her up, even to her own father; at first insisted upon waiting till your return; and it was only when I was informed what you yourself were that my scruples gave way."

Waife remained long silent, breathing very hard, and passing his hand several times over his forehead; at last he said more quietly than he had yet spoken, "Will you tell me where they have gone?"

"I do not know, and if I did know I would not tell you! Are they not right when they say that that innocent child should not be tempted away by—by—a— in short, by you, Sir?"

"*They* said! Her father—said that!—he said that! Did he—did *he* say it? Had he the heart?"

Mayor. "No, I don't think he said it. Eh, Mr. Williams? He spoke little to me!"

Mr. Williams. "Of course he would not expose that person. But the woman—the lady, I mean."

Waife. "Woman! Ah, yes. The bailiff's wife said there was a woman. What woman? What's her name?"

Mayor. "Really you must excuse me. I can say no more. I have consented to see you thus, because whatever you might have been, or may be, still it was due to myself to explain how I came to give up the child; and, besides, you left money with me, and *that*, at least, I can give to your own hand."

The Mayor turned to his desk, unlocked it, and drew forth the bag which Waife had sent to him.

As he extended it toward the Comedian, his hand trembled and his cheek flushed. For Waife's one bright eye had in it such depths of reproach, that again the Mayor's conscience was sorely troubled, and he would have given ten times the contents of that bag to have been alone with the vagrant, and to have said the soothing things he did not dare to say before Williams, who sate there mute and grim, guarding him

from being once more "taken in." "If you had confided in me at first, Mr. Chapman," he said, pathetically, "or even if now, I could aid you in an honest way of life!"

"Aid him—now!" said Williams, with a snort. "At it again! you're not a man, you're an angel!"

"But if he is penitent, Williams."

"So! so! so!" murmured Waife. "Thank Heaven it was not he who spoke against me—it was but a strange woman. Oh!" he suddenly broke off with a groan. "Oh—but that strange woman—who, what can she be? and Sophy with her and him. Distraction! Yes, yes, I take the money. I shall want it all. Sir Isaac, pick up that bag. Gentlemen, good-day to you!" He bowed; such a failure that bow! Nothing ducal in it! bowed and turned toward the door; then, when he gained the threshold, as if some meeker, holier thought restored to him dignity of bearing, his form rose, though his face softened, and stretching his right hand toward the Mayor, he said: "You did but as all perhaps would have done on the evidence before you. You meant to be kind to her. If you knew all, how you would repent! I do not blame—I forgive you."

He was gone; the Mayor stood transfixed. Even Williams felt a cold, comfortless chill. "He does not look like it," said the foreman. "Cheer up, Sir, no wonder you were taken in—who would not have been?"

"Hark! that hoot again. Go, Williams, don't let the men insult him. Do, do. I shall be grateful."

But before Williams got to the door, the cripple and his dog had vanished; vanished down a dark narrow alley on the opposite side of the street. The rude workmen had followed him to the mouth of the alley, mocking him. Of the exact charge against the Comedian's good name they were not informed: that knowledge was confined to the Mayor and Mr. Williams. But the latter had dropped such harsh expressions, that, bad as the charge might really be, all in Mr. Hartopp's employment probably deemed it worse, if possible, than it really was. And wretch indeed must be the man by whom the Mayor had been confessedly taken in, and whom the Mayor had indignantly given up to the reproaches of his own conscience. But the cripple was now out of sight, lost amidst those labyrinths of squalid homes which, in great towns, are thrust beyond view, branching off abruptly behind High Streets and Market-places; so that strangers passing only along the broad thoroughfares, with glittering shops and gas-lit causeways, exclaim, "Where do the Poor live?"

CHAPTER III.

Ecce iterum Crispinus!

It was by no calculation, but by involuntary impulse, that Waife, thus escaping from the harsh looks and taunting murmurs of the gossips round the Mayor's door, dived into those sordid devious lanes. Vaguely he felt that a ban was upon him; that the covering he had thrown over his brand of outcast was lifted up; that a sentence of expulsion from the High Streets and Market-places of decorous life was passed against him. He had been robbed of his child, and Society, speaking in the voice of the Mayor of Gatesboro', said, "Rightly! thou art not fit companion for the innocent!"

At length he found himself out of the town, beyond its straggling suburbs, and once more on the solitary road. He had already walked far that day. He was thoroughly exhausted. He sate himself down in a dry ditch by the hedgerow, and taking his head between his hands, strove to re-collect his thoughts, and rearrange his plans.

Waife had returned that day to the bailiff's cottage joyous and elated. He had spent the week in traveling—partly, though not all the way on foot, to the distant village in which he had learned in youth the basket-maker's art! He had found the very cottage wherein he had then lodged, vacant, and to be let. There seemed a ready opening for the humble but pleasant craft to which he had diverted his ambition.

The bailiff intrusted with the letting of the cottage and osier-ground, had, it is true, requested some reference—not, of course, as to all a tenant's antecedents, but as to the reasonable probability that the tenant would be a quiet, sober man, who would pay his rent, and abstain from poaching. Waife thought he might safely presume that the Mayor of Gatesboro' would not, so far as that went, object to take his past upon trust, and give him a good word toward securing so harmless and obscure a future. Waife had never asked such a favor before of any man; he shrunk from doing so now; but for his grandchild's sake he would waive his scruples or humble his pride.

Thus, then, he had come back, full of Elysian dreams, to his Sophy—his Enchanted Princess. Gone—taken away, and with the Mayor's consent—the consent of the very man upon whom he had been relying to secure a livelihood and a shelter! Little more had he learned at the cottage, for Mr. and Mrs. Gooch had been cautioned to be as brief as possible, and give him no clew to regain his lost treasure, beyond the note which informed him it was with a lawful possessor. And, indeed, the worthy pair were now prejudiced against the vagrant, and were rude to him. But he had not tarried to cross-examine and inquire. He had rushed at once to the Mayor. Sophy was with one whose legal right to dispose of her he could not question. But where that person would take her—where he resided—what he would do with her—he had no means to conjecture. Most probably (he thought and guessed) she would be carried abroad—was already out of the country. But the woman with Losely, he had not heard her described; his guesses did not turn toward Mrs. Crane; the woman was evidently hostile to him—it was the woman who had spoken against him—not Losely; the woman whose tongue had poisoned Hartopp's mind, and turned into scorn all that admiring respect which had before greeted the great Comedian. Why was that woman his enemy? Who could she be? What had she to do with Sophy? He was half beside himself with terror. It was to save her less even from Losely than from such direful women as Losely made his confidants and associates that

Waife had taken Sophy to himself. As for Mrs. Crane, she had never seemed a foe to *him* —she had ceded the child to him willingly—he had no reason to believe, from the way in which she had spoken of Losely when he last saw her, that she could henceforth aid the interests, or share the schemes, of the man whose perfidies she then denounced; and as to Rugge, he had not appeared at Gatesboro'. Mrs. Crane had prudently suggested that his presence would not be propitiatory or discreet, and that all reference to him, or to the contract with him, should be suppressed. Thus Waife was wholly without one guiding evidence—one groundwork for conjecture—that might enable him to track the lost; all he knew was, that she had been given up to a man whose whereabouts it was difficult to discover—a vagrant, of life darker and more hidden than his own.

But how had the hunters discovered the place where he had treasured up his Sophy—how dogged that retreat? Perhaps from the village in which we first saw him. Ay, doubtless, learned from Mrs. Saunders of the dog he had purchased, and the dog would have served to direct them on his path. At that thought he pushed away Sir Isaac, who had been resting his head on the old man's knee—pushed him away angrily; the poor dog slunk off in sorrowful surprise, and whined.

"Ungrateful wretch that I am," cried Waife, and he opened his arms to the brute, who bounded forgivingly to his breast!

"Come, come, we will go back to the village in Surrey. Tramp, tramp!" said the cripple, rousing himself. And at that moment, just as he gained his feet, a friendly hand was laid on his shoulder, and a friendly voice said—

"I have found you! the crystal said so! Marbellous!"

"Merle," faltered out the vagrant—"Merle, you here! Oh, perhaps you come to tell me good news: you have seen Sophy—you know where she is!"

The Cobbler shook his head. "Can't see her just at present. Crystal says nout about her. But I know she was taken from you—and—and —you shake tremenjous! Lean on me, Mr. Waife, and call off that big animal. He's a suspicating my calves, and circumtittyvating them. Thank ye, Sir. You see I was born with sinister aspects in my Twelfth House, which appertains to big animals and enemies; and dogs of that size about one's calves are—malefics!"

As Merle now slowly led the cripple, and Sir Isaac, relinquishing his first suspicions, walked droopingly beside them, the Cobbler began a long story, much encumbered by astrological illustrations and moralizing comments. The substance of his narrative is thus epitomized: Rugge, in pursuing Waife's track, had naturally called on Merle in company with Losely and Mrs. Crane. The Cobbler had no clew to give, and no mind to give it if clew he had possessed. But his curiosity being roused, he had smothered the inclination to dismiss the inquirers with more speed than good-breeding, and even refreshed his slight acquaintance with Mr. Rugge in so well simulated a courtesy, that that gentleman, when left behind by Losely and Mrs. Crane in their journey to Gatesboro', condescended, for want of other company, to drink tea with Mr Merle; and tea being succeeded by stronger potations, he fairly unbosomed himself of his hopes of recovering Sophy, and his ambition of hiring the York theatre.

The day afterward, Rugge went away seemingly in high spirits, and the Cobbler had no doubt, from some words he let fall in passing Merle's stall toward the railway, that Sophy was recaptured, and that Rugge was summoned to take possession of her. Ascertaining from the manager that Losely and Mrs. Crane had gone to Gatesboro', the Cobbler called to mind that he had a sister living there, married to a greengrocer in a very small way, whom he had not seen for many years; and finding his business slack just then, he resolved to pay this relative a visit, with the benevolent intention of looking up Waife, whom he expected, from Rugge's account, to find there, and offering him any consolation or aid in his power, should Sophy have been taken from him against his will. A consultation with his crystal, which showed him the face of Mr. Waife alone, and much dejected, and a horary scheme which promised success to his journey, decided his movements. He had arrived at Gatesboro' the day before, had heard a confused story about a Mr. Chapman, with his dog and his child, whom the Mayor had first taken up, but who afterward, in some mysterious manner, had taken in the Mayor. Happily, the darker gossip in the High Street had not penetrated the back lane in which Merles' sister resided. There little more was known than the fact that this mysterious stranger had imposed on the wisdom of Gatesboro's learned Institute and enlightened Mayor. Merle, at no loss to identify Waife with Chapman, could only suppose that he had been discovered to be a strolling player in Rugge's exhibition, after pretending to be some much greater man. Such an offense the Cobbler was not disposed to consider heinous. But Mr. Chapman was gone from Gatesboro', none knew whither; and Merle had not yet ventured to call himself on the chief magistrate of the place, to inquire after a man by whom that august personage had been deceived. "Howsomever," quoth Merle, in conclusion, "I was just standing at my sister's door, with her last babby in my arms, in Scrob Lane, when I saw you pass by like a shot. You were gone while I ran in to give up the babby, who is teething, with malefics in square—gone —clean out of sight. You took one turn, I took another; but you see we meet at last, as good men always do in this world—or the other, which is the same thing in the long-run."

Waife, who had listened to his friend without other interruption than an occasional nod of the head or interjectional expletive, was now restored to much of his constitutional mood of sanguine cheerfulness. He recognized Mrs. Crane in the woman described, and if surprised, he was rejoiced. For much as he disliked that gentlewoman, he thought Sophy might be in worse female hands. Without much need of sagacity, he divined the gist of the truth. Losely had somehow or other become acquainted with Rugge, and sold Sophy to the manager. Where Rugge was, there would Sophy be. It could not be very difficult to find out the place in which Rugge was now exhibiting; and then—ah then!

Waife whistled to Sir Isaac, tapped his forehead, and smiled triumphantly. Meanwhile the Cobbler had led him back into the suburb, with the kind intention of offering him food and bed for the night at his sister's house. But Waife had already formed his plan; in London, and in London alone, could he be sure to learn where Rugge was now exhibiting; in London there were places at which that information could be gleaned at once. The last train to the Metropolis was not gone. He would slink round the town to the station; he and Sir Isaac at that hour might secure places unnoticed.

When Merle found it was in vain to press him to stay over the night, the good-hearted Cobbler accompanied him to the train, and, while Waife shrunk him into a dark corner, bought the tickets for dog and master. As he was paying for these, he overheard two citizens talking of Mr. Chapman. It was indeed Mr. Williams explaining to a fellow-burgess just returned to Gatesboro', after a week's absence, how and by what manner of man Mr. Hartopp had been taken in. At what Williams said, the Cobbler's cheek paled. When he joined the Comedian, his manner was greatly altered; he gave the tickets without speaking, but looked hard into Waife's face, as the latter repaid him the fares. "No," said the Cobbler, suddenly, "I don't believe it."

"Believe what?" asked Waife, startled.

"That you are—"

The Cobbler paused, bent forward, and whispered the rest of the sentence close in the vagrant's ear. Waife's head fell on his bosom, but he made no answer.

"Speak," cried Merle; "say 'tis a lie." The poor cripple's lip writhed, but he still spoke not.

Merle looked aghast at that obstinate silence. At length, but very slowly, as the warning bell summoned him and Sir Isaac to their several places in the train, Waife found voice. "So you too, you too desert and despise me! God's will be done!" He moved away—spiritless, limping, hiding his face as well as he could. The porter took the dog from him, to thrust it into one of the boxes reserved for such four-footed passengers.

Waife, thus parted from his last friend—I mean the dog—looked after Sir Isaac wistfully, and crept into a third-class carriage, in which luckily there was no one else. Suddenly Merle jumped in, snatched his hand, and pressed it tightly. "I don't despise, I don't turn my back on you; whenever you and the little one want a home and a friend, come to Kit Merle as before, and I'll bite my tongue out if I ask any more questions of you; I'll ask the stars instead."

The Cobbler had but just time to splutter out these comforting words, and redescend the carriage, when the train put itself into movement, and the lifelike iron miracle, fuming, hissing, and screeching, bore off to London its motley convoy of human beings, each passenger's heart a mystery to the other, all bound the same road, all wedged close within the same whirling mechanism: what a separate and distinct world in each! Such is Civilization! How like we are one to the other in the mass! how strangely dissimilar in the abstract!

G

CHAPTER IV.

"If," says a great thinker (DEGERANDO, *Du Perfectionnement Moral*, chap. ix., "On the Difficulties we encounter in Self Study")—"If one concentrates reflection too much on one's self, one ends by no longer seeing any thing, or seeing only what one wishes. By the very act, as it were, of capturing one's self, the personage we believe we have seized, escapes, disappears. Nor is it only the complexity of our inner being which obstructs our examination, but its exceeding variability. The investigator's regard should embrace all the sides of the subject, and perseveringly pursue all its phases."

It is the race-week in Humberston, a county town far from Gatesboro', and in the north of England. The races last three days; the first day is over: it has been a brilliant spectacle; the course crowded with the carriages of provincial magnates, with equestrian betters of note from the metropolis; blacklegs in great muster; there have been gaming-booths on the ground, and gipsies telling fortunes; much Champagne imbibed by the well-bred, much soda-water and brandy by the vulgar. Thousands and tens of thousands have been lost and won; some paupers been for the time enriched; some rich men made poor for life. Horses have won fame; some of their owners lost character. Din and uproar, and coarse oaths, and rude passions—all have had their hour. The amateurs of the higher classes have gone back to dignified country-houses, as courteous hosts or favored guests. The professional speculators of a lower grade have poured back into the county town, and inns and taverns are crowded. Drink is hotly called for at reeking bars; waiters and chambermaids pass to and fro, with dishes, and tankards, and bottles in their hands. All is noise and bustle, and eating and swilling, and disputation and slang, wild glee and wilder despair among those who come back from the race-course to the inns in the county town. At one of these taverns, neither the best nor the worst, and in a small narrow slice of a room that seemed robbed from the landing-place, sate Mrs. Crane, in her iron-gray silk gown. She was seated close by the open window, as carriages, chaises, flies, carts, vans, and horsemen succeeded each other thick and fast, watching the scene with a soured, scornful look. For human joy, as for human grief, she had little sympathy. Life had no Saturnalian holidays left for her. Some memory in her past had poisoned the well-springs of her social being. Hopes and objects she had still, but out of the wrecks of the natural and healthful existence of womanhood those objects and hopes stood forth exaggerated, intense, as are the ruling passions in monomania. A bad woman is popularly said to be worse than a wicked man. If so, partly because women, being more solitary, brood more unceasingly over cherished ideas, whether good or evil; partly also, for the same reason that makes a wicked gentleman, who has lost caste and character, more irreclaimable than a wicked clown, low-born and low-bred, viz., that in proportion to the loss of shame is the gain in recklessness; but principally, perhaps, because in extreme wickedness there is necessarily a distortion of the reasoning faculty; and man, accustomed from the cradle rather to reason than to feel, has that faculty more firm against abrupt twists and lesions than it is in woman; where virtue may have left him, logic may still linger, and he may decline to push

evil to a point at which it is clear to his understanding that profit vanishes and punishment rests; while woman, once abandoned to ill, finds sufficient charm in its mere excitement; and, regardless of consequences, where the man asks, "Can I?" raves out, "I will!" Thus man may be criminal through cupidity, vanity, love, jealousy, fear, ambition, rarely in civilized, that is, reasoning life, through hate and revenge; for hate is a profitless investment, and revenge a ruinous speculation. But when women are thoroughly depraved and hardened, nine times out of ten it is hatred or revenge that makes them so. Arabella Crane had not, however, attained to that last state of wickedness, which, consistent in evil, is callous to remorse; she was not yet unsexed. In her nature was still that essence, "varying and mutable," which distinguishes woman while womanhood is left to her. And now, as she sate gazing on the throng below, her haggard mind recoiled perhaps from the conscious shadow of the Evil Principle which, invoked as an ally, remains as a destroyer. Her dark front relaxed; she moved in her seat uneasily. "Must it be always thus!" she muttered —"always this hell here! Even now, if in one large pardon I could include the undoer, the earth myself, and again be human—human, even as those slight triflers or coarse brawlers that pass yonder! Oh, for something in common with common life!"

Her lips closed, and her eyes again fell upon the crowded street. At that moment three or four heavy vans or wagons filled with operatives or laborers and their wives, coming back from the race-course, obstructed the way; two outriders with satin jackets were expostulating, cracking their whips, and seeking to clear space for an open carriage with four thorough-bred impatient horses. Toward that carriage every gazer from the windows was directing eager eyes; each foot-passenger on the pavement lifted his hat—evidently in that carriage some great person! Like all who are at war with the world as it is, Arabella Crane abhorred the great, and despised the small for worshiping the great. But still her own fierce dark eyes mechanically followed those of the vulgar. The carriage bore a marquis's coronet on its panels, and was filled with ladies; two other carriages bearing a similar coronet, and evidently belonging to the same party, were in the rear. Mrs. Crane started. In that first carriage, as it now slowly moved under her very window, and paused a minute or more, till the obstructing vehicles in front were marshaled into order—there flashed upon her eyes a face radiant with female beauty in its more glorious prime. Among the crowd at that moment was a blind man, adding to the various discords of the street by a miserable hurdy-gurdy. In the movement of the throng to get nearer to a sight of the ladies in the carriage, this poor creature was thrown forward; the dog that led him, an ugly brute, on his own account or his master's, took fright, broke from the string, and ran under the horses' hoofs, snarling. The horses became restive; the blind man made a plunge after his dog, and was all but run over. The lady in the first carriage, alarmed for his safety, rose up from her seat, and made her outriders dismount, lead away the poor blind man, and restore to him his dog. Thus engaged, her face shone full upon Arabella Crane; and with that face rushed a tide of earlier memories. Long, very long since she had seen that face—seen it in those years when she herself, Arabella Crane, was young and handsome.

The poor man—who seemed not to realize the idea of the danger he had escaped—once more safe, the lady resumed her seat; and now that the momentary animation of humane fear and womanly compassion passed from her countenance—its expression altered—it took the calm, almost the coldness, of a Greek statue. But with the calm there was a listless melancholy which Greek sculpture never gives to the Parian stone; stone can not convey that melancholy—it is the shadow which needs for its substance a living, mortal heart.

Crack went the whips; the horses bounded on —the equipage rolled fast down the street, followed by its satellites. "Well!" said a voice in the street below, "I never saw Lady Montfort in such beauty. Ah, here comes my lord!"

Mrs. Crane heard and looked forth again. A dozen or more gentlemen on horseback rode slowly up the street; which of these was Lord Montfort?—not difficult to distinguish. As the by-standers lifted their hats to the cavalcade, the horsemen generally returned the salutation by simply touching their own—one horseman uncovered wholly. That one must be the Marquis, the greatest man in those parts, with lands stretching away on either side that town for miles and miles; a territory which, in feudal times, might have alarmed a king. He, the civilest, must be the greatest. A man still young, decidedly good-looking, wonderfully well-dressed, wonderfully well-mounted, the careless ease of high rank in his air and gesture. To the superficial gaze, just what the great Lord of Montfort should be. Look again! In that fair face is there not something that puts you in mind of a florid period which contains a feeble platitude? —something in its very prettiness that betrays a weak nature, and a sterile mind?

The cavalcade passed away—the vans and the wagons again usurped the thoroughfare. Arabella Crane left the window, and approached the little looking-glass over the mantle-piece. She gazed upon her own face bitterly—she was comparing it with the features of the dazzling Marchioness.

The door was flung open, and Jasper Losely sauntered in, whistling a French air, and flapping the dust from his boots with his kid glove.

"All right," said he, gayly. "A famous day of it."

"You have won," said Mrs. Crane, in a tone rather of disappointment than congratulation.

"Yes. That £100 of Rugge's has been the making of me. I only wanted a capital just to start with!" He flung himself into a chair, opened his pocket-book, and scrutinized its contents. "Guess," said he, suddenly, "on whose horse I won these two *rouleaux?* Lord Montfort's! Ay, and I saw my lady!"

"So did I see her, from this window. She did not look happy!"

"Not happy!—with such an equipage! neatest turn-out I ever set eyes on; not happy, indeed! I had half a mind to ride up to her carriage and advance a claim to her gratitude."

"Gratitude! Oh, for your part in that miserable affair of which you told me?"

"Not a miserable affair for her, but certainly *I* never got any good from it—trouble for nothing! *Basta!* No use looking back!"

"No use; but who can help it!" said Arabella Crane, sighing heavily; then, as if eager to change the subject, she added, abruptly, "Mr. Rugge has been here twice this morning, highly excited—the child will not act. He says you are bound to make her do so!"

"Nonsense. That is his look-out. *I* see after children, indeed!"

Mrs. Crane (with a visible effort). "Listen to me, Jasper Losely, I have no reason to love that child, as you may suppose. But now that you so desert her, I think I feel compassion for her; and when, this morning, I raised my hand to strike her for her stubborn spirit, and saw her eyes unflinching, and her pale, pale, but fearless face, my arm fell to my side powerless. She will not take to this life without the old man. She will waste away and die."

Losely. "How you bother me! Are you serious? What am I to do?"

Mrs. Crane. "You have won money you say; revoke the contract; pay Rugge back his £100. He is disappointed in his bargain; he will take the money."

Losely. I dare say he will, indeed. No—I have won to-day, it is true, but I may lose to-morrow, and, besides, I am in want of so many things: when one gets a little money, one has an immediate necessity for more—ha! ha! Still I would not have the child die; and she may grow up to be of use. I tell you what I will do; if, when the races are over, I find I have gained enough to afford it, I will see about buying her off. But £100 is too much! Rugge ought to take half the money, or a quarter, because, if she don't act, I suppose she does eat."

Odious as the man's words were, he said them with a laugh that seemed to render them less revolting—the laugh of a very handsome mouth, showing teeth still brilliantly white. More comely than usual that day, for he was in great good-humor, it was difficult to conceive that a man with so healthful and fair an exterior was really quite rotten at heart.

"Your own young laugh!" said Arabella Crane, almost tenderly. "I know not how it is, but this day I feel as if I were less old—altered though I be in face and mind. I have allowed myself to pity that child; while I speak, I can pity you. Yes! pity—when I think of what you were. Must you go on thus? To what! Jasper Losely," she continued sharply, eagerly, clasping her hands—"hear me—I have an income not large, it is true, but assured; you have nothing but what, as you say, you may lose to-morrow; share my income! Fulfill your solemn promises—marry me. I will forget whose daughter that girl is—I will be a mother to her. And for yourself, give me the right to feel for you again as I once did, and I may find a way to raise you yet—higher than you can raise yourself. I have some wit, Jasper, as you know. At the worst you shall have the pastime—I, the toil. In your illness I will nurse you; in your joys I will intrude no share. Whom else can you marry? to whom else could you confide? who else could—"

She stopped short as if an adder had stung her, uttering a shriek of rage, of pain; for Jasper Losely, who had hitherto listened to her, stupefied, astounded, here burst into a fit of merriment, in which there was such undisguised contempt, such an enjoyment of the ludicrous, provoked by the idea of the marriage pressed upon him, that the insult pierced the woman to her very soul.

Continuing his laugh, despite that cry of wrathful agony it had caused, Jasper rose, holding his sides, and surveying himself in the glass, with very different feelings at the sight from those that had made his companion's gaze there a few minutes before so mournful.

"My dear good friend," he said, composing himself at last, and wiping his eyes, "excuse me, but really when you said whom else could I marry—ha! ha!—it did seem such a capital joke! Marry you, my fair Crane! No—put that idea out of your head—we know each other too well for conjugal felicity. You love me now; you always did, and always will—that is, while we are not tied to each other. Women who once love me, always love me—can't help themselves. I am sure I don't know why, except that I am what they call a villain! Ha! the clock striking seven—I dine with a set of fellows I have picked up on the race-ground; they don't know me, nor I them; we shall be better acquainted after the third bottle. Cheer up, Crane; go and scold Sophy, and make her act if you can; if not, scold Rugge into letting her alone. Scold somebody—nothing like it, to keep other folks quiet, and one's self busy. Adieu! and pray, no more matrimonial solicitations—they frighten me! Gad," added Losely, as he banged the door, "such overtures would frighten Old Nick himself!"

Did Arabella Crane hear those last words—or had she not heard enough? If Losely had turned and beheld her face, would it have startled back his trivial laugh? Possibly; but it would have caused only a momentary uneasiness. If Alecto herself had reared over him her brow horrent with vipers, Jasper Losely would have thought he had only to look handsome, and say coaxingly, "Alecto, my dear!" and the Fury would have pawned her head-dress to pay his washing-bill.

After all, in the face of the grim woman he had thus so wantonly incensed there was not so much menace as resolve. And that resolve was yet more shown in the movement of the hands than in the aspect of the countenance; those hands—lean, firm, nervous hands—slowly expanded; then as slowly clenched, as if her own thought had taken substance, and she was locking it in a clasp—tightly, tightly—never to be loosened till the pulse was still.

CHAPTER V.

The most submissive where they love may be the most stubborn where they do not love.—Sophy is stubborn to Mr. Rugge.—That injured man summons to his side Mrs. Crane, imitating the policy of those potentates who would retrieve the failures of force by the successes of diplomacy.

Mr. Rugge has obtained his object. But now comes the question, "What will he do with it?"

Question with as many heads as the Hydra; and no sooner does an Author dispose of one head than up springs another.

Sophy has been bought and paid for—she is now, legally, Mr. Rugge's property. But there was a wise peer who once bought Punch—Punch became his property, and was brought in triumph to his lordship's house. To my lord's great dismay Punch would not talk. To Rugge's great dismay Sophy would not act.

Rendered up to Jasper Losely and Mrs. Crane, they had not lost an hour in removing her from Gatesboro' and its neighborhood. They did not, however, go back to the village in which they had left Rugge, but returned straight to London, and wrote to the manager to join them there.

Sophy, once captured, seemed stupefied; she evinced no noisy passion—she made no violent resistance. When she was told to love and obey a father in Jasper Losely, she lifted her eyes to his face—then turned them away, and shook her head, mute and incredulous. That man her father! she did not believe it. Indeed, Jasper took no pains to convince her of the relationship, or win her attachment. He was not unkindly rough; he seemed wholly indifferent—probably he was so—for the ruling vice of the man was in his egotism. It was not so much that he had bad principles and bad feelings, as that he had no principles and no feelings at all, except as they began, continued, and ended in that system of centralization, which not more paralyzes healthful action in a state than it does in the individual man. Self-indulgence with him was absolute. He was not without power of keen calculation, not without much cunning. He could conceive a project for some gain far off in the future, and concoct, for its realization, schemes subtly woven, astutely guarded. But he could not secure their success by any long-sustained sacrifices of the caprice of one hour or the indolence of the next. If it had been a great object to him for life to win Sophy's filial affection, he would not have bored himself for five minutes each day to gain that object. Besides, he had just enough of shame to render him uneasy at the sight of the child he had deliberately sold. So, after chucking her under the chin, and telling her to be a good girl and be grateful for all that Mrs. Crane had done for her, and meant still to do, he consigned her almost solely to that lady's care.

When Rugge arrived, and Sophy was informed of her intended destination, she broke silence; her color went and came quickly; she declared, folding her arms upon her breast, that she would never act if separated from her grandfather. Mrs. Crane, struck by her manner, suggested to Rugge that it might be as well now that she was legally secured to the manager, to humor her wish, and re-engage Waife. Whatever the tale with which, in order to obtain Sophy from the Mayor, she had turned that worthy magistrate's mind against the Comedian, she had not gratified Mr. Rugge by a similar confidence to him. To him she said nothing which might operate against renewing engagements with Waife, if he were so disposed. But Rugge had no faith in a child's firmness, and he had a strong spite against Waife, so he obstinately refused. He insisted, however, as a peremptory condition of the bargain, that Mr. Losely and Mrs. Crane should accompany him to the town to which he had transferred his troop, both in order by their presence to confirm his authority over Sophy, and to sanction his claim to her, should Waife reappear and dispute it. For Rugge's profession being scarcely legitimate, and decidedly equivocal, his right to bring up a female child to the same calling might be called in question before a magistrate, and necessitate the production of her father in order to substantiate the special contract. In return, the manager handsomely offered to Mr. Losely and Mrs. Crane to pay their expenses in the excursion—a liberality haughtily rejected by Mrs. Crane for herself, though she agreed at her own charge to accompany Losely, if he decided on complying with the manager's request. Losely at first raised objections, but hearing that there would be races in the neighborhood, and having a peculiar passion for betting and all kinds of gambling, as well as an ardent desire to enjoy his £100 in so fashionable a manner, he consented to delay his return to the Continent, and attend Arabella Crane to the provincial Elis. Rugge carried off Sophy to her fellow "orphans."

And Sophy would not act!

In vain she was coaxed—in vain she was threatened—in vain she was deprived of food—in vain shut up in a dark hole—in vain was the lash held over her. Rugge, tyrant though he was, did not suffer the lash to fall. His self-restraint there might be humanity—might be fear of the consequences. For the state of her health began to alarm him; she might die—there might be an inquest. He wished now that he had taken Mrs. Crane's suggestion, and re-engaged Waife. But where *was* Waife? Meanwhile he had advertised the Young Phenomenon; placarded the walls with the name of Juliet Araminta; got up the piece of the Remorseless Baron, with a new rock scene. As Waife had had nothing to say in that drama, so any one could act his part.

The first performance was announced for that night: there would be such an audience—the best seats even now pre-engaged—first night of the race week. The clock had struck seven—the performance began at eight. And Sophy would not act!

The child was seated in a space that served for the green-room, behind the scenes. The whole company had been convened to persuade or shame her out of her obstinacy. The king's lieutenant, the seductive personage of the troop, was on one knee to her, like a lover. He was accustomed to lovers' parts, both on the stage and off it. Off it he had one favored phrase, hackneyed but effective. "You are too pretty to be so cruel." Thrice he now repeated that phrase, with a simper that might have melted a heart of stone between each repetition. Behind Sophy's chair, and sticking calico-flowers into the child's tresses, stood the senior matron of the establishment—not a bad sort of woman—who kept the dresses, nursed the sick, revered Rugge, told fortunes on a pack of cards which she always kept in her pocket, and acted occasionally in parts where age was no drawback and ugliness desirable—such as a witch, or duenna, or whatever in the dialogue was poetic-

ally called "Hag." Indeed, Hag was the name she usually took from Rugge—that which she bore from her defunct husband was Gormerick. This lady, as she braided the garland, was also bent on the soothing system, saying, with great sweetness, considering that her mouth was full of pins, "Now, deary—now, dovey—look at ooself in the glass; we could beat oo, and pinch oo, and stick pins into oo, dovey, but we won't. Dovey will be good, I know;" and a great pat of rouge came on the child's pale cheeks. The clown therewith squatting before her with his hands on his knees, grinned lustily, and shrieked out, "My eyes, what a beauty!"

Rugge, meanwhile, one hand thrust in his bosom, contemplated the diplomatic efforts of his ministers, and saw by Sophy's compressed lips and unwinking eyes, that their cajoleries were unsuccessful. He approached, and hissed into her ear, "Don't madden me! don't!—you will act, eh?"

"No," said Sophy, suddenly rising; and tearing the wreath from her hair, she set her small foot on it with force. "No! not if you killed me!"

"Gods!" faltered Rugge. "And the sum I have paid! I am diddled! Who has gone for Mrs. Crane?"

"Tom," said the clown.

The word was scarcely out of the clown's mouth ere Mrs. Crane herself emerged from a side-scene, and, putting off her bonnet, laid both hands on the child's shoulders, and looked her in the face without speaking. The child as firmly returned the gaze. Give that child a martyr's cause, and in that frail body there would have been a martyr's soul. Arabella Crane, not inexperienced in children, recognized a power of will, stronger than the power of brute force, in that tranquillity of eye—the spark of calm light in its tender blue—blue, pure as the sky; light, steadfast as the star.

"Leave her to me, all of you," said Mrs. Crane. "I will take her to your private room, Mr. Rugge;" and she led the child away to a sort of recess, room it could not be rightly called, fenced round with boxes and crates, and containing the manager's desk and two stools.

"Sophy," then said Mrs. Crane, "you say you will not act unless your grandfather be with you. Now, hear me. You know that I have been always stern and hard with you. I never professed to love you—nor do I. But you have not found me untruthful. When I say a thing seriously, as I am speaking now, you may believe me. Act to-night, and I will promise you faithfully that I will either bring your grandfather here, or I will order it so that you shall be restored to him. If you refuse, I make no threat, but I shall leave this place; and my belief is that you will be your grandfather's death."

"His death—his death—I!"

"By first dying yourself. Oh, you smile; you think it would be happiness to die. What matter that the old man you profess to care for is broken-hearted! Brat, leave selfishness to boys—you are a girl! Suffer!"

"Selfish!" murmured Sophy, "selfish! that was said of me before. Selfish!—ah, I understand. No, I ought not to wish to die—what would become of him?" She fell on her knees, and, raising both her clasped hands, prayed inly, silently—an instant, not more. She rose. "If I do act, then—it is a promise—you will keep it. I shall see him—he shall know where I am—we shall meet!"

"A promise—sacred. I will keep it. Oh, girl, how much you will love some day—how your heart will ache! and when you are my age, look at that heart, then at your glass—perhaps you may be, within and without, like me."

Sophy—innocent Sophy—stared, awe-stricken, but uncomprehending. Mrs. Crane led her back passive.

"There, she will act. Put on the wreath. Trick her out. Hark ye, Mr. Rugge. This is for one night. I have made conditions with her: either you must take back her grandfather, or—she must return to him."

"And my £100?"

"In the latter case ought to be repaid you."

"Am I never to have the Royal York theatre? Ambition of my life, Ma'am! Dreamed of it thrice! Ha! but she will act, and succeed. But to take back the old vagabond—a bitter pill! He shall halve it with me! Ma'am, I'm your grateful—"

CHAPTER VI.

Threadbare is the simile which compares the world to a stage. Schiller, less complimentary than Shakspeare, lowers the illustration from a stage to a puppet-show. But ever between realities and shows there is a secret communication, an undetected interchange—sometimes a stern reality in the heart of the ostensible actor, a fantastic stage-play in the brain of the unnoticed spectator. The Bandit's Child on the proscenium is still poor little Sophy, in spite of garlands and rouge. But that honest rough-looking fellow to whom, in respect for services to Sovereign and Country, the apprentice yields way—may he not be—the crafty Comedian?

TARAN-TARANTARA—rub-a-dub-dub—play up horn—roll drum—a quarter to eight; and the crowd already thick before Rugge's Grand Exhibition—"Remorseless Baron and Bandit's Child! Young Phenomenon—Juliet Araminta—Patronized by the Nobility in general, and expecting daily to be summoned to perform before the Queen—*Vivat Regina!*"—Rub-a-dub-dub. The company issue from the curtain-range in front of the proscenium. Splendid dresses. The Phenomenon!—'tis she!

"My eyes, there's a beauty!" cries the clown.

The days have already grown somewhat shorter; but it is not yet dusk. How charmingly pretty she still is, despite that horrid paint; but how wasted those poor bare snowy arms!

A most doleful lugubrious dirge mingles with the drum and horn. A man has forced his way close by the stage—a man with a confounded cracked hurdy-gurdy. Whine—whine—creaks the hurdy-gurdy, "Stop that—stop that muzeek," cries a delicate apprentice, clapping his hands to his ears.

"Pity a poor blind—" answers the man with a hurdy-gurdy.

"Oh you are blind, are you? but we are not deaf. There's a penny not to play. What black thing have you got there by a string?"

"My dog, Sir!"

"Devilish ugly one—not like a dog—more like a bear—with horns!"

"I say, master," cries the clown, "Here's a blind man come to see the Phenomenon!"

The crowd laugh; they make way for the blind man's black dog. They suspect, from the clown's address, that the blind man has something to do with the company.

You never saw two uglier specimens of their several species than the blind man and his black dog. He had rough red hair and a red beard, his face had a sort of twist that made every feature seem crooked. His eyes were not bandaged, but the lids were closed, and he lifted them up piteously as if seeking for light. He did not seem, however, like a common beggar; had rather the appearance of a reduced sailor. Yes, you would have bet ten to one he had been a sailor; not that his dress belonged to that noble calling, but his build, the roll of his walk, the tie of his cravat, a blue anchor tattooed on that great brown hand—certainly a sailor—a British tar! poor man.

The dog was hideous enough to have been exhibited as a *lusus naturæ* — evidently very aged —for its face and ears were gray, the rest of it a rusty reddish black. It had immensely long ears, pricked up like horns. It was a dog that must have been brought from foreign parts; it might have come from Acheron, sire by Cerberus, so portentous and (if not irreverent the epithet) so infernal was its aspect, with that gray face, those antlered ears, and its ineffably weird demeanor altogether. A big dog, too, and evidently a strong one. All prudent folks would have made way for a man led by that dog. Whine creaked the hurdy-gurdy, and bow-wow, all of a sudden, barked the dog. Sophy stifled a cry, pressed her hand to her breast, and such a ray of joy flashed over her face that it would have warmed your heart for a month to have seen it.

But do you mean to say, Mr. Author, that that British Tar (gallant, no doubt, but hideous) is Gentleman Waife, or that Stygian animal the snowy-curled Sir Isaac?

Upon my word, when I look at them myself, I, the Historian, am puzzled. If it had not been for that bow-wow, I am sure Sophy would not have suspected. "Tara-taran-tara. Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, walk in, the performance is about to commence!" Sophy lingers last.

"Yes, Sir," said the blind man who had been talking to the apprentice. "Yes, Sir," said he, loud and emphatically, as if his word had been questioned. "The child was snowed up, but luckily the window of the hut was left open: Exactly at two o'clock in the morning that dog came to the window, set up a howl, and—"

Sophy could hear no more—led away behind the curtain by the King's Lieutenant. But she had heard enough to stir her heart with an emotion that set all the dimples round her lip into undulating play.

CHAPTER VII.

A Sham carries off the Reality.

And she did act, and how charmingly! with what glee and what gusto! Rugge was beside himself with pride and rapture. He could hardly perform his own Baronial part for admiration. The audience, a far choicer and more fastidious one than that in the Surrey village, was amazed, enthusiastic.

"I shall live to see my dream come true! I shall have the great York Theatre!" said Rugge, as he took off his wig and laid his head on his pillow. "Restore her for the £100! not for thousands!"

Alas, my sweet Sophy, alas! Has not the joy that made thee perform so well, undone thee? Ah! hadst thou but had the wit to act horribly, and be hissed!

"Uprose the sun, and uprose Baron Rugge."

Not that ordinarily he was a very early man; but his excitement broke his slumbers. He had taken up his quarters on the ground floor of a small lodging-house close to his Exhibition; in the same house lodged his senior Matron, and Sophy herself. Mrs. Gormerick being ordered to watch the child, and never lose sight of her, slept in the same room with Sophy, in the upper story of the house. The old woman served Rugge for housekeeper, made his tea, grilled his chop, and for company's sake shared his meals. Excitement as often sharpens the appetite as it takes it away. Rugge had supped on hope, and he felt a craving for a more substantial breakfast. Accordingly, when he had dressed, he thrust his head into the passage, and seeing there the maid-of-all-work unbarring the street door, bade her go up stairs and wake the Hag, that is, Mrs. Gormerick. Saying this, he extended a key; for he ever took the precaution, before retiring to rest, to lock the door of the room to which Sophy was consigned, on the outside, and guard the key till the next morning.

The maid nodded, and ascended the stairs. Less time than he expected passed away before Mrs. Gormerick made her appearance, her gray hair streaming under her nightcap, her form endued in a loose wrapper—her very face a tragedy.

"Powers above! What has happened?" exclaimed Rugge, prophetically.

"She is gone!" sobbed Mrs. Gormerick; and seeing the lifted arm and clenched fist of the manager, prudently fainted away.

CHAPTER VIII.

Corollaries from the problem suggested in Chapters VI. and VII.

Broad daylight, nearly nine o'clock indeed, and Jasper Losely is walking back to his inn from the place at which he had dined the evening before. He has spent the night drinking, gambling, and though he looks heated, there is no sign of fatigue. Nature in wasting on this man many of her most glorious elements of happiness, had not forgotten a Herculean constitution—always restless and never tired, always drinking and never drunk. Certainly it is some consolation to delicate individuals, that it seldom happens that the sickly are very wicked. Criminals are generally athletic—constitution and conscience equally tough; large backs to their heads—strong suspensorial muscles—digestions that save them from the over-fine nerves of the virtuous. The native animal must be vigorous in the human being, when the moral safeguards are daringly overleaped. Jasper was

not alone, but with an acquaintance he had made at the dinner, and whom he invited to his inn to breakfast; they were walking familiarly arm in arm. Very unlike the brilliant Losely—a young man under thirty, who seemed to have washed out all the colors of youth in dirty water. His eyes dull, their whites yellow; his complexion sodden. His form was thick-set and heavy; his features pug, with a cross of the bull-dog. In dress, a specimen of the flash style of sporting man, as exhibited on the turf, or more often, perhaps, in the Ring; Belcher neckcloth, with an immense pin representing a jockey at full gallop; cut away coat, corduroy breeches, and boots with tops of a chalky white. Yet, withal, not the air and walk of a genuine born and bred sporting man, even of the vulgar order. Something about him which reveals the pretender. A would-be hawk with a pigeon's liver—a would-be sportsman with a cockney's nurture.

Samuel Adolphus Poole is an orphan of respectable connections. His future expectations chiefly rest on an uncle from whom, as godfather, he takes the loathed name of Samuel. He prefers to sign himself Adolphus; he is popularly styled Dolly. For his present existence he relies ostensibly on his salary as an assistant in the house of a London tradesman in a fashionable way of business. Mr. Latham, his employer, has made a considerable fortune, less by his shop than by discounting the bills of his customers, or of other borrowers whom the loan draws into the net of the custom. Mr. Latham connives at the sporting tastes of Dolly Poole. Dolly has often thus been enabled to pick up useful pieces of information as to the names and repute of such denizens of the sporting world as might apply to Mr. Latham for temporary accommodation. Dolly Poole has many sporting friends; he has also many debts. He has been a dupe, he is now a rogue; but he wants decision of character to put into practice many valuable ideas that his experience of dupe and his development into rogue suggest to his ambition. Still, however, now and then, whenever a shabby trick can be safely done he is what he calls "lucky." He has conceived a prodigious admiration for Jasper Losely, one cause for which will be explained in the dialogue about to be recorded; another cause for which is analogous to that loving submission with which some ill-conditioned brute acknowledges a master in the hand that has thrashed it. For at Losely's first appearance at the convivial meeting just concluded, being nettled at the imperious airs of superiority which that roysterer assumed, mistaking for effeminacy Jasper's elaborate dandyism, and not recognizing in the bravo's elegant proportions the tiger-like strength of which, in truth, that tiger-like suppleness should have warned him, Dolly Poole provoked a quarrel, and being himself a stout fellow, nor unaccustomed to athletic exercises, began to spar; the next moment he was at the other end of the room, full sprawl on the floor; and, two minutes afterward, the quarrel made up by conciliating banqueters, with every bone in his skin seeming still to rattle, he was generously blubbering out that he never bore malice, and shaking hands with Jasper Losely as if he had found a benefactor. But now to the dialogue.

JASPER. "Yes, Poole, my hearty, as you say, that fellow trumping my best club lost me the last rubber. There's no certainty in whist, if one has a spoon for a partner."

POOLE. "No certainty in every rubber, but next to certainty in the long run, when a man plays as well as you do, Mr. Losely. Your winnings to-night must have been pretty large, though you had a bad partner almost every hand;—pretty large—eh?"

JASPER (carelessly). "Nothing to talk of—a few ponies!"

POOLE. "More than a few; I should know."

JASPER. "Why? You did not play after the first rubber."

POOLE. "No, when I saw your play on that first rubber, I cut out, and bet on you; and very grateful to you I am. Still you would win more with a partner who understood your game."

The shrewd Dolly paused a moment, and leaning significantly on Jasper's arm, added, in a half whisper, "I do; it is a French one."

Jasper did not change color, but a quick rise of the eyebrow, and a slight jerk of the neck, betrayed some little surprise or uneasiness; however, he rejoined without hesitation—"French, ay! In France there is more dash in playing out trumps than there is with English players."

"And with a player like you," said Poole, still in a half whisper, "more trumps to play out."

Jasper turned round sharp and short; the hard, cruel expression of his mouth, little seen of late, came back to it. Poole recoiled, and his bones began again to ache. "I did not mean to offend you, Mr. Losely, but to caution."

"Caution!"

"There were two knowing coves, who, if they had not been so drunk, would not have lost their money without a row, and they would have seen *how* they lost it; they are sharpers—you served them right—don't be angry with me. You want a partner—so do I; you play better than I do, but I play well; you shall have two-thirds of our winnings, and when you come to town I'll introduce you to a pleasant set of young fellows—green."

Jasper mused a moment. "You know a thing or two, I see, Master Poole, and we'll discuss the whole subject after breakfast. Arn't you hungry?—No!—I am! Hillo! who's that?"

His arm was seized by Mr. Rugge. "She's gone—fled!" gasped the manager, breathless. "Out of the lattice—fifteen feet high—not dashed to pieces—vanished!"

"Go on and order breakfast," said Losely to Mr. Poole, who was listening too inquisitively. He drew the manager away. "Can't you keep your tongue in your head before strangers? the girl is gone!"

"Out of the lattice, and fifteen feet high!"

"Any sheets left hanging out of the lattice?"

"Sheets! No."

"Then she did not go without help—somebody must have thrown up to her a rope-ladder—nothing so easy—done it myself scores of times for the descent of 'maids who love the moon,' Mr. Rugge. But at her age there is not a moon—at least there is not a man in the moon; one must dismiss, then, the idea of a rope-ladder—too precocious. But are you quite sure she is gone? not hiding in some cupboard?

Sacre!—very odd. Have you seen Mrs. Crane about it?"

"Yes, just come from her; she thinks that villain Waife must have stolen her. But I want you, Sir, to come with me to a magistrate."

"Magistrate! I—why?—nonsense—set the police to work."

"Your deposition that she is your lawful child, lawfully made over to me, is necessary for the Inquisition—I mean Police."

"Hang it, what a bother! I hate magistrates, and all belonging to them. Well, I must breakfast; I'll see to it afterward. Oblige me by not calling Mr. Waife a villain—good old fellow in his way."

"Good! Powers above!"

"But if he took her off how did he get at her? It must have been preconcerted."

"Ha! true. But she has not been suffered to speak to a soul not in the company—Mrs. Crane excepted."

"Perhaps at the performance last night some signal was given?"

"But if Waife had been there I should have seen him; my troop would have known him; such a remarkable face—one eye, too."

"Well, well, do what you think best. I'll call on you after breakfast; let me go now. *Basta! basta!*"

Losely wrenched himself from the manager, and strode off to the inn; then, ere joining Poole, he sought Mrs. Crane.

"This going before a magistrate," said Losely, "to depose that I have made over my child to that blackguard showman—in this town, too—after such luck as I have had, and where bright prospects are opening on me, is most disagreeable. And supposing, when we have traced Sophy, she should be really with the old man—awkward! In short, my dear friend, my dear Bella" (Losely could be very coaxing when it was worth his while), "you just manage this for me. I have a fellow in the next room waiting to breakfast; as soon as breakfast is over I shall be off to the race-ground, and so shirk that ranting old bore; you'll call on him instead, and settle it somehow." He was out of the room before she could answer.

Mrs. Crane found it no easy matter to soothe the infuriate manager, when he heard Losely was gone to amuse himself at the race-course. Nor did she give herself much trouble to pacify Mr. Rugge's anger, or assist his investigations. Her interest in the whole affair seemed over. Left thus to his own devices, Rugge, however, began to institute a sharp, and what promised to be an effective investigation. He ascertained that the fugitive certainly had not left by the railway, or by any of the public conveyances; he sent scouts over all the neighborhood; he enlisted the sympathy of the police, who confidently assured him that they had 'a net-work over the three kingdoms;' no doubt they have, and we pay for it; but the meshes are so large that any thing less than a whale must be silly indeed if it consent to be caught. Rugge's suspicions were directed to Waife—he could collect, however, no evidence to confirm them. No person answering to Waife's description had been seen in the town. Once, indeed, Rugge was close on the right scent; for, insisting upon Waife's one eye and his possession of a white dog, he was told by several witnesses that a man blind of two eyes, and led by a black dog, had been close before the stage, just previous to the performance. But then the clown had spoken to that very man; all the Thespian company had observed him; all of them had known Waife familiarly for years; and all deposed that any creature more unlike to Waife than the blind man could not be turned out of Nature's workshop. But where was that blind man? They found out the wayside inn in which he had taken a lodging for the night; and there it was ascertained that he had paid for his room beforehand, stating that he should start for the race-course early in the morning. Rugge himself set out to the race-course to kill two birds with one stone — catch Mr. Losely — examine the blind man himself.

He did catch Mr. Losely, and very nearly caught something else—for that gentleman was in a ring of noisy horsemen, mounted on a hired hack, and loud as the noisiest. When Rugge came up to his stirrup, and began his harangue, Losely turned his hack round with so sudden an applianee of bit and spur that the animal lashed out, and its heel went within an inch of the manager's cheek-bone. Before Rugge could recover Losely was in a hand gallop. But the blind man! Of course Rugge did not find him? You are mistaken; he did. The blind man was there, dog and all. The manager spoke to him, and did not know him from Adam.

Nor have you or I, my venerated readers, any right whatsoever to doubt whether Mr. Rugge could be so stolidly obtuse. Granting that blind sailor to be the veritable William Waife—William Waife was a man of genius, taking pains to appear an ordinary mortal. And the anecdotes of Munden, or of Bamfylde Moore Carew, suffice to tell us how Protean is the power of transformation in a man whose genius is mimetic. But how often does it happen to us, venerated readers, not to recognize a man of genius, even when he takes no particular pains to escape detection! A man of genius may be for ten years our next-door neighbor—he may dine in company with us twice a week—his face may be as familiar to our eyes as our arm-chair—his voice to our ears as the click of our parlor-clock—yet we are never more astonished than when all of a sudden, some bright day, it is discovered that our next-door neighbor is—a man of genius. Did you ever hear tell of the life of a man of genius, but what there were numerous witnesses who deposed to the fact, that until, perfidious dissembler, he flared up and set the Thames on fire, they had never seen any thing in him—an odd creature, perhaps a good creature—probably a poor creature—But a MAN of GENIUS! They would as soon have suspected him of being the Cham of Tartary! Nay, candid readers, are there not some of you who refuse to the last to recognize the man of genius, till he has paid his penny to Charon, and his passport to immortality has been duly examined by the custom-house officers of Styx! When one half the world drag forth that same next-door neighbor, place him on a pedestal, and have him cried, "O yez! O yez! Found a man of genius! Public property—open to inspection!" does not the other half the world put on its spectacles, turn up its nose, and cry, "*That* a man of genius, indeed! Pelt him!

—pelt him!" Then of course there is a clatter, what the vulgar call "a shindy," round the pedestal. Squeezed by his believers, shied at by his scoffers, the poor man gets horribly mauled about, and drops from the perch in the midst of the row. Then they shovel him over, clap a great stone on his relics, wipe their foreheads, shake hands, compromise the dispute, the one half the world admitting that though he was a genius, he was still an ordinary man; the other half allowing that though he was an ordinary man, he was still a genius. And so on to the next pedestal with its "Hic stet," and the next great stone with its "Hic jacet."

The manager of the Grand Theatrical Exhibition gazed on the blind sailor, and did not know him from Adam!

CHAPTER IX.

The aboriginal Man-eater, or Pocket-Cannibal, is susceptible of the refining influences of Civilization. He decorates his lair with the skins of his victims; he adorns his person with the spoils of those whom he devours. Mr. Losely introduced to Mr. Poole's friends—dresses for dinner; and, combining elegance with appetite, eats them up.

Elated with the success which had rewarded his talents for pecuniary speculation, and dismissing from his mind all thoughts of the fugitive Sophy and the spoliated Rugge, Jasper Losely returned to London in company with his new friend, Mr. Poole. He left Arabella Crane to perform the same journey, unattended; but that grim lady, carefully concealing any resentment at such want of gallantry, felt assured that she should not be long in London without being honored by his visits.

In renewing their old acquaintance, Mrs. Crane had contrived to establish over Jasper that kind of influence which a vain man, full of schemes that are not to be told to all the world, but which it is convenient to discuss with some confidential friend who admires himself too highly not to respect his secrets, mechanically yields to a woman whose wits are superior to his own.

It is true that Jasper, on his return to the metropolis, was not magnetically attracted toward Podden Place; nay, days and even weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Crane was not gladdened by his presence. But she knew that her influence was only suspended—not extinct. The body attracted was for the moment kept from the body attracting by the abnormal weights that had dropped into its pockets. Restore the body thus temporarily counterpoised to its former lightness, and it would turn to Podden Place as the needle to the Pole. Meanwhile, oblivious of all such natural laws, the disloyal Jasper had fixed himself as far from the reach of the magnet as from Bloomsbury's remotest verge is St. James's animated centre. The apartment he engaged was showy and commodious. He added largely to his wardrobe—his dressing-case—his trinket-box. Nor, be it here observed, was Mr. Losely one of those beauish brigands who wear tawdry scarfs over soiled linen, and paste rings upon unwashed digitals. To do him justice, the man, so stony-hearted to others, loved and cherished his own person with exquisite tenderness, lavished upon it delicate attentions, and gave to it the very best he could afford. He was no coarse debauchee, smelling of bad cigars and ardent spirits. Cigars, indeed, were not among his vices (at worst the rare peccadillo of a *cigarette*)—spirit-drinking was; but the monster's digestion was still so strong, that he could have drunk out a gin palace, and you would only have sniffed the jasmin or heliotrope on the dainty cambric that wiped the last drop from his lips. Had his soul been a tenth part as clean as the form that belied it, Jasper Losely had been a saint! His apartments secured, his appearance thus revised and embellished, Jasper's next care was an equipage in keeping; he hired a smart cabriolet with a high-stepping horse, and, to go behind it, a groom whose size had been stunted in infancy by provident parents designing him to earn his bread in the stables as a light-weight, and therefore mingling his mother's milk with heavy liquors. In short, Jasper Losely set up to be a buck about town; in that capacity Dolly Poole introduced him to several young gentlemen who combined commercial vocations with sporting tastes; they could not but participate in Poole's admiring and somewhat envious respect for Jasper Losely. There was indeed about the vigorous miscreant a great deal of false brilliancy. Deteriorated from earlier youth though the beauty of his countenance might be, it was still undeniably handsome; and as force of muscle is beauty in itself in the eyes of young sporting men, so Jasper dazzled many a *gracilis puer*, who had the ambition to become an athlete, with the rare personal strength which, as if in the exuberance of animal spirits, he would sometimes condescend to display, by feats that astonished the curious and frightened the timid—such as bending a poker or horse-shoe, between hands elegantly white nor unadorned with rings—or lifting the weight of Samuel Dolly by the waistband, and holding him at arm's-length, with a playful bet of ten to one that he could stand by the fire-place and pitch the said Samuel Dolly out of the open window. To know so strong a man, so fine an animal, was something to boast of! Then, too, if Jasper had a false brilliancy, he had also a false *bonhommie;* it was true that he was somewhat imperious, swaggering, bullying—but he was also off-hand and jocund; and as you knew him, that sidelong look, that defying gait (look and gait of the man whom the world cuts), wore away. In fact, he had got into a world which did not cut him, and his exterior was improved by the atmosphere.

Mr. Losely professed to dislike general society. Drawing-rooms were insipid; clubs full of old fogies. "I am for life, my boys," said Mr. Losely:

> "'Can sorrow from the goblet flow,
> Or pain from Beauty's eye?'"

Mr. Losely, therefore, his hat on one side, lounged into the saloons of theatres, accompanied by a cohort of juvenile admirers, their hats on one side also, and returned to the pleasantest little suppers in his own apartment. There "the goblet" flowed—and after the goblet, cigars for some, and a rubber for all.

So puissant Losely's vitality, and so blessed by the stars his luck, that his form seemed to wax stronger and his purse fuller by this "life." No wonder he was all for a life of that kind; but the slight beings who tried to keep up with

him grew thinner and thinner, and poorer and poorer; a few weeks made their cheeks spectral and their pockets a dismal void. Then as some dropped off from sheer inanition, others whom they had decoyed by their praises of "Life" and its hero, came into the magic circle to fade and vanish in their turn.

In a space of time incredibly brief not a whist-player was left upon the field; the victorious Losely had trumped out the last! Some few, whom Nature had endowed more liberally than Fortune, still retained strength enough to sup—if asked;

"But none who came to sup remained to play."

"Plague on it," said Losely to Poole, as one afternoon they were dividing the final spoils. "Your friends are mightily soon cleaned out; could not even get up double dummy, last night; and we must hit on some new plan for replenishing the coffers! You have rich relations; can't I help you to make them more useful?"

Said Dolly Poole, who was looking exceedingly bilious, and had become a martyr to chronic headache, "My relations are prigs! Some of them give me the cold shoulder, others—a great deal of jaw. But as for tin, I might as well scrape a flint for it. My uncle Sam is more anxious about my sins than the other codgers, because he is my godfather, and responsible for my sins, I suppose; and he says he will put me in the way of being respectable. My head's splitting—"

"Wood does split till it is seasoned," answered Losely. "Good fellow, uncle Sam! He'll put you in the way of tin; nothing else makes a man respectable."

"Yes—so he says; a girl with money—"

"A wife—tin canister! Introduce me to her, and she shall be tied to you."

Samuel Dolly did not appear to relish the idea of such an introduction. "I have not been introduced to her myself," said he. "But if you advise me to be spliced, why don't you get spliced yourself? a handsome fellow like you can be at no loss for an heiress."

"Heiresses are the most horrid cheats in the world," said Losely: "there is always some father, or uncle, or fusty Lord Chancellor whose consent is essential, and not to be had. Heiresses in scores have been over head and ears in love with me. Before I left Paris, I sold their locks of hair to a wig-maker—three great trunksful. Honor bright. But there were only two whom I could have safely allowed to run away with me; and they were so closely watched, poor things, that I was forced to leave them to their fate—early graves! Don't talk to me of heiresses, Dolly, I have been the victim of heiresses. But a rich widow is an estimable creature. Against widows, if rich, I have not a word to say; and to tell you the trnth, there is a widow whom I suspect I have fascinated, and whose connection I have a particular private reason for deeming desirable! She has a whelp of a son, who is a spoke in my wheel—were I his father-in-law, would not I be a spoke in his? I'd teach the boy '*life*,' Dolly." Here all trace of beauty vanished from Jasper's face, and Poole, staring at him, pushed away his chair. "But"—continued Losely, regaining his more usual expression of levity and boldness—"But I am not yet quite sure what the widow has, besides her son, in her own possession; we shall see. Meanwhile, is there—*no* chance of a rubber to-night?"

"None; unless you will let Brown and Smith play upon tick."

"Pooh! but there's Robinson, he has an aunt he can borrow from?"

"Robinson! spitting blood, with an attack of *delirium tremens!*—you have done for him."

"Can sorrow from the goblet flow?" said Losely. "Well, I suppose it can—when a man has no coats to his stomach; but you and I, Dolly Poole, have stomachs thick as pea-jackets, and proof as gutta percha."

Poole forced a ghastly smile, while Losely, gayly springing up, swept his share of booty into his pockets, slapped his comrade on the back, and said—"Then, if the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain! Hang whist, and up with *rouge-et-noir!* I have an infallible method of winning—only, it requires capital. You will club your cash with mine, and I'll play for both. Sup here to-night, and we'll go to the —— hell afterward."

Samuel Dolly had the most perfect confidence in his friend's science in the art of gambling, and he did not, therefore, dissent from the proposal made. Jasper gave a fresh touch to his toilet, and stepped into his cabriolet. Poole cast on him a look of envy, and crawled to his lodging—too ill for his desk, and with a strong desire to take to his bed.

CHAPTER X.

"Is there a heart that never loved
Nor felt soft woman's sigh?"

If there be such a heart, it is not in the breast of a Pocket-Cannibal. Your true Man-eater is usually of an amorous temperament: he can be indeed sufficiently fond of a lady to eat her up. Mr. Losely makes the acquaintance of a widow. For farther particulars inquire within.

THE dignified serenity of Gloucester Place, Portman Square, is agitated by the intrusion of a new inhabitant. A house in that favored locality, which had for several months maintained "the solemn stillness and the dread repose" which appertain to dwellings that are to be let upon lease, unfurnished, suddenly started into that exuberant and aggressive life which irritates the nerves of its peaceful neighbors. The bills have been removed from the windows—the walls have been cleaned down and pointed—the street-door repainted a lively green—workmen have gone in and out. The observant ladies (single ones) in the house opposite, discover, by the help of a telescope, that the drawing-rooms have been new papered, canary-colored ground—festoon borders, and that the mouldings of the shutters have been gilt. Gilt shutters! that looks ominous of an ostentatious and party-giving tenant.

Then carts full of furniture have stopped at the door—carpets, tables, chairs, beds, wardrobes—all seemingly new, and in no inelegant taste, have been disgorged into the hall. It has been noticed, too, that every day a lady of slight figure and genteel habiliments has come, seemingly to inspect progress—evidently the new tenant. Sometimes she comes alone; sometimes with a dark-eyed handsome lad, probably her

son. Who can she be? what is she? what is her name? her history? has she a right to settle in Gloucester Place, Portman Square? The detective police of London is not peculiarly vigilant; but its defects are supplied by the voluntary efforts of unmarried ladies. The newcomer was a widow; her husband had been in the army; of good family; but a *mauvais sujet;* she had been left in straitened circumstances with an only son. It was supposed that she had unexpectedly come into a fortune—on the strength of which she had removed from Pimlico into Gloucester Place. At length — the preparations completed—one Monday afternoon the widow, accompanied by her son, came to settle. The next day a footman in genteel livery (brown and orange) appeared at the door. Then, for the rest of the week, the baker and butcher called regularly. On the following Sunday the lady and her son appeared at church.

No reader will be at a loss to discover in the new tenant of No. — Gloucester Place, the widowed mother of Lionel Haughton. The letter for that lady which Darrell had intrusted to his young cousin, had, in complimentary and cordial language, claimed the right to provide for her comfortable and honorable subsistence; and announced that, henceforth, £800 a year would be placed quarterly to her account at Mr. Darrell's banker, and that an additional sum of £1200 was already there deposited in her name, in order to enable her to furnish any residence to which she might be inclined to remove. Mrs. Haughton, therewith, had removed to Gloucester Place.

She is seated by the window in her front drawing-room—surveying with proud though grateful heart the elegancies by which she is surrounded. A very winning countenance—lively eyes, that in themselves may be overquick and petulant, but their expression is chastened by a gentle kindly mouth; and over the whole face, the attitude, the air, even the dress itself, is diffused the unmistakable simplicity of a sincere, natural character. No doubt Mrs. Haughton has her tempers, and her vanities, and her little harmless feminine weaknesses; but you could not help feeling in her presence that you were with an affectionate, warm-hearted, honest, good woman. She might not have the refinements of tone and manner which stamp the high-bred gentlewoman of convention; she might evince the deficiencies of an imperfect third-rate education; but she was saved from vulgarity by a certain undefinable grace of person and music of voice—even when she said or did things that well-bred people do not say or do; and there was an engaging intelligence in those quick hazel eyes that made you sure that she was sensible, even when she uttered what was silly.

Mrs. Haughton turned from the interior of the room to the open window. She is on the look-out for her son, who has gone to call on Colonel Morley, and who ought to be returned by this time. She begins to get a little fidgety—somewhat cross. While thus standing and thus watchful, there comes thundering down the street a high-stepping horse—bay, with white legs—it whirls on a cabriolet—blue, with vermilion wheels—two hands, in yellow kid gloves, are just seen under the hood. Mrs. Haughton suddenly blushes and draws in her head. Too late! the cabriolet has stopped—a gentleman leans forward, takes off his hat, bows respectfully. "Dear, dear!" murmurs Mrs. Haughton, "I do think he is going to call; some people are born to be tempted—my temptations have been immense! He is getting out—he knocks—I can't say, now, that I am not at home—very awkward! I wish Lionel were here! What does he mean—neglecting his own mother, and leaving her a prey to tempters?"

While the footman is responding to the smart knock of the visitor, we will explain how Mrs. Haughton had incurred that gentleman's acquaintance. In one of her walks to her new house while it was in the hands of the decorators, her mind being much absorbed in the consideration whether her drawing-room curtains should be chintz or tabouret—just as she was crossing the street, she was all but run over by a gentleman's cabriolet. The horse was hard-mouthed, going at full speed. The driver pulled up just in time; but the wheel grazed her dress, and though she ran back instinctively, yet, when she was safe on the pavement, the fright overpowered her nerves, and she clung to the street-post almost fainting. Two or three passers-by humanely gathered round her; and the driver, looking back, and muttering to himself—"Not bad looking—neatly dressed—lady-like—French shawl—may have tin—worth while, perhaps!" gallantly descended and hastened to offer apologies, with a respectful hope that she was not injured.

Mrs. Haughton answered somewhat tartly, but being one of those good-hearted women who, apt to be rude, are extremely sorry for it the moment afterward, she wished to repair any hurt to his feelings occasioned by her first impulse; and, when, renewing his excuses, he offered his arm over the crossing, she did not like to refuse. On gaining the side of the way on which her house was situated, she had recovered sufficiently to blush for having accepted such familiar assistance from a perfect stranger, and somewhat to falter in returning thanks for his politeness.

Our gentleman, whose estimate of his attractions was not humble, ascribed the blushing cheek and faltering voice to the natural effect produced by his appearance; and he himself admiring very much a handsome bracelet on her wrist, which he deemed a favorable prognostic of "tin," he watched her to her door, and sent his groom in the course of the evening to make discreet inquiries in the neighborhood. The result of the inquiries induced him to resolve upon prosecuting the acquaintance thus begun. He contrived to learn the hours at which Mrs. Haughton usually visited the house, and to pass by Gloucester Place at the very nick of time. His bow was recognizing, respectful, interrogative—a bow that asked "how much farther?" But Mrs. Haughton's bow respondent seemed to declare "not at all!" The stranger did not adventure more that day; but a day or two afterward he came again into Gloucester Place on foot. On that occasion Mrs. Haughton was with her son, and the gentleman would not seem to perceive her. The next day he returned, she was then alone, and just as she gained her door he advanced—"I beg you ten thousand par-

dons, madam; but if I am rightly informed, I have the honor to address Mrs. Charles Haughton!"

The lady bowed in surprise.

"Ah, madam, your lamented husband was one of my most particular friends."

"You don't say so!" cried Mrs. Haughton, and looking more attentively at the stranger. There was in his dress and appearance something that she thought very stylish—a particular friend of Charles Haughton's was sure to be stylish—to be a man of the first water. And she loved the poor Captain's memory—her heart warmed to any "particular friend of his."

"Yes," resumed the gentleman, noting the advantage he had gained, "though I was considerably his junior, we were great cronies—excuse that familiar expression—in the Hussars together—"

"The Captain was not in the Hussars, Sir; he was in the Guards."

"Of course he was; but I was saying in the Hussars, together with the Guards, there were some very fine fellows—very fine—he was one of them. I could not resist paying my respects to the widowed lady of so fine a fellow. I know it is a liberty, ma'am, but 'tis my way. People who know me well—and I have a large acquaintance—are kind enough to excuse my way. And to think that villainous horse, which I had just bought out of Lord Bolton's stud—(200 guineas, ma'am, and cheap)—should have nearly taken the life of Charles Haughton's lovely relict. If any body else had been driving that brute, I shudder to think what might have been the consequences; but I have a wrist of iron. Strength is a vulgar qualification—very vulgar—but when it saves a lady from perishing, how can one be ashamed of it? But I am detaining you. Your own house, Mrs. Haughton?"

"Yes, Sir, I have just taken it, but the workmen have not finished. I am not yet settled here."

"Charming situation! My friend left a son, I believe? In the army already?"

"No, Sir; but he wishes it very much."

"Mr. Darrell, I think, could gratify that wish."

"What! you know Mr. Darrell, that most excellent, generous man? All we have we owe to him."

The gentleman abruptly turned aside—wisely—for his expression of face at that praise might have startled Mrs. Haughton.

"Yes, I knew him once. He has had many a fee out of my family. Goodish lawyer—cleverish man—and rich as a Jew. I should like to see my old friend's son, ma'am. He must be monstrous handsome with such parents!"

"Oh, Sir, very like his father. I shall be proud to present him to you."

"Ma'am, I thank you. I will have the honor to call—"

And thus is explained how Jasper Losely has knocked at Mrs. Haughton's door—has walked up her stairs—has seated himself in her drawing-room, and is now edging his chair somewhat nearer to her, and throwing into his voice and looks a degree of admiration, which has been sincerely kindled by the aspect of her elegant apartments.

Jessica Haughton was not one of those women, if such there be, who do not know when a gentleman is making up to them. She knew perfectly well, that, with a very little encouragement, her visitor would declare himself a suitor. Nor, to speak truth, was she quite insensible to his handsome person, nor quite unmoved by his flatteries. She had her weak points, and vanity was one of them. Nor conceived she, poor lady, the slightest suspicion that Jasper Losely was not a personage whose attentions might flatter any woman. Though he had not even announced a name, but, pushing aside the footman, had sauntered in with as familiar an ease as if he had been a first cousin; though he had not uttered a syllable that could define his station, or attest his boasted friendship with the dear defunct, still Mrs. Haughton implicitly believed that she was with one of those gay Chiefs of *Ton* who had glittered round her Charlie in the earlier morning of his life, ere he had sold out of the Guards, and brought himself out of jail; a lord, or an honorable at least, and was even (I shudder to say) revolving in her mind whether it might not be an excellent thing for her dear Lionel if she could prevail on herself to procure for him the prop and guidance of a distinguished and brilliant father-in-law—rich, noble, evidently good-natured, sensible, attractive. Oh! but the temptation was growing more and more IMMENSE! when suddenly the door opened, and in sprang Lionel, crying out, "Mother, dear, the Colonel has come with me on purpose to—"

He stopped short, staring hard at Jasper Losely. That gentleman advanced a few steps, extending his hand, but came to an abrupt halt on seeing Colonel Morley's figure now filling up the door-way. Not that he feared recognition—the Colonel did not know him by sight, but he knew by sight the Colonel. In his own younger day, when lolling over the rails of Rotten Row, he had enviously noted the leaders of fashion pass by, and Colonel Morley had not escaped his observation. Colonel Morley, indeed, was one of those men who by name and repute are sure to be known to all who, like Jasper Losely in his youth, would fain know something about that gaudy, babbling, and remorseless world which, like the sun, either vivifies or corrupts, according to the properties of the object on which it shines. Strange to say, it was the mere sight of the real fine gentleman that made the mock fine gentleman shrink and collapse. Though Jasper Losely knew himself to be still called a magnificent man—one of royal Nature's Life-guardsmen—though confident that from top to toe his habiliments could defy the criticism of the strictest martinet in polite costume, no sooner did that figure—by no means handsome, and clad in garments innocent of buckram, but guilty of wrinkles—appear on the threshold than Jasper Losely felt small and shabby, as if he had been suddenly reduced to five feet two, and had bought his coat out of an old clothesman's bag.

Without appearing even to see Mr. Losely, the Colonel, in his turn, as he glided past him toward Mrs. Haughton, had, with what is proverbially called the corner of the eye, taken the whole of that impostor's superb *personnel* into calm survey, had read him through and through, and decided on these two points without the slightest hesitation—"a lady-killer and a sharper."

Quick as breathing had been the effect thus severally produced on Mrs. Haughton's visitors, which it has cost so many words to describe, so quick that the Colonel, without any apparent pause of dialogue, has already taken up the sentence Lionel left uncompleted, and says, as he bows over Mrs. Haughton's hand, "Come on purpose to claim acquaintance with an old friend's widow, a young friend's mother."

Mrs. Haughton. "I am sure, Colonel Morley, I am very much flattered. And you, too, knew the poor dear Captain; 'tis so pleasant to think that his old friends come round us now. This gentleman, also, was a particular friend of dear Charles's."

The Colonel had somewhat small eyes, which moved with habitual slowness. He lifted those eyes, let them drop upon Jasper (who still stood in the middle of the room, with one hand still half-extended toward Lionel), and letting the eyes rest there while he spoke, repeated,

"Particular friend of Charles Haughton's—the only one of his particular friends whom I never had the honor to see before."

Jasper who, whatever his deficiency in other virtues, certainly did not lack courage, made a strong effort at self-possession, and without replying to the Colonel, whose remark had not been directly addressed to himself, said, in his most rollicking tone—"Yes, Mrs. Haughton, Charles was my particular friend, but"—lifting his eye-glass—"but this gentleman was," dropping the eye-glass negligently, "not in our set, I suppose." Then advancing to Lionel, and seizing his hand, "I must introduce myself—the image of your father, I declare! I was saying to Mrs. Haughton how much I should like to see you—proposing to her, just as you came in, that we should go to the play together. Oh, ma'am, you may trust him to me safely. Young men should see LIFE." Here Jasper tipped Lionel one of those knowing winks with which he was accustomed to delight and insnare the young friends of Mr. Poole, and hurried on: "But in an innocent way, ma'am, such as mothers would approve. We'll fix an evening for it, when I have the honor to call again. Good-morning, Mrs. Haughton. Your hand again, Sir (to Lionel).—Ah, we shall be great friends, I guess! You must let me take you out in my cab—teach you to handle the ribbons, eh? 'Gad my old friend Charles *was* a whip. Ha! ha! Good-day, good-day!"

Not a muscle had moved in the Colonel's face during Mr. Losely's jovial monologue. But when Jasper had bowed himself out, Mrs. Haughton courtesying and ringing the bell for the footman to open the street-door, the man of the world (and, as man of the world, Colonel Morley was consummate) again raised those small, slow eyes—this time toward *her* face—and dropped the words—

"My old friend's particular friend is—not bad-looking, Mrs. Haughton!"

"And so lively and pleasant," returned Mrs. Haughton, with a slight rise of color, but no other sign of embarrassment. "It may be a nice acquaintance for Lionel."

"Mother!" cried that ungrateful boy, "you are not speaking seriously. I think the man is odious. If he were not my father's friend, I should say he was—"

"What, Lionel?" asked the Colonel, blandly—"was what?"

"Snobbish, Sir."

"Lionel, how dare you!" exclaimed Mrs. Haughton. "What vulgar words boys do pick up at school, Colonel Morley!"

"We must be careful that they do not pick up worse than words when they leave school, my dear madam. You will forgive me, but Mr. Darrell has so expressly—of course, with your permission—commended this young gentleman to my responsible care and guidance—so openly confided to me his views and intentions, that perhaps you would do me the very great favor not to force upon him, against his own wishes, the acquaintance of—that very good-looking person."

Mrs. Haughton pouted, but kept down her rising temper. The Colonel began to awe her.

"By-the-by," continued the man of the world, "may I inquire the name of my old friend's particular friend?"

"His name—upon my word I really don't know it. Perhaps he left his card—ring the bell, Lionel."

"You don't know his name, yet you know *him*, ma'am, and would allow your son to see LIFE under his auspices! I beg you ten thousand pardons; but even ladies the most cautious, mothers the most watchful, are exposed to—"

"Immense temptations—that is—to—to—"

"I understand perfectly, my dear Mrs. Haughton."

The footman appeared. "Did that gentleman leave a card?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did not you ask his name when he entered?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he said he would announce himself."

When the footman had withdrawn, Mrs. Haughton exclaimed, piteously, "I have been to blame, Colonel—I see it. But Lionel will tell you how I came to know the gentleman—the gentleman who nearly run over me. Lionel, and then spoke so kindly about your dear father."

"Oh, that is the person! I supposed so," cried Lionel, kissing his mother, who was inclined to burst into tears. "I can explain it all now, Colonel Morley. Any one who says a kind word about my father warms my mother's heart to him at once. Is it not so, mother dear?"

"And long be it so," said Colonel Morley, with graceful earnestness; "and may such be my passport to your confidence, Mrs. Haughton. Charles was my old school-fellow—a little boy when I and Darrell were in the sixth form; and pardon me if I add that if that gentleman were ever Charles Haughton's particular friend, he could scarcely have been a very wise one. For, unless his appearance greatly belie his years, he must have been little more than a boy when Charles Haughton left Lionel fatherless."

Here, in the delicacy of tact, seeing that Mrs. Haughton looked ashamed of the subject, and seemed aware of her imprudence, the Colonel rose, with a request—cheerfully granted—that Lionel might be allowed to come to breakfast with him the next morning.

CHAPTER XI.

A man of the world, having accepted a troublesome charge, considers "what he will do with it;" and having promptly decided, is sure, first, that he could not have done better; and, secondly, that much may be said to prove that he could not have done worse.

Reserving to a later occasion any more detailed description of Colonel Morley, it suffices for the present to say that he was a man of a very fine understanding, as applied to the special world in which he lived. Though no one had a more numerous circle of friends, and though with many of those friends he was on that footing of familiar intimacy which Darrell's active career once, and his rigid seclusion of late, could not have established with any idle denizen of that brilliant society in which Colonel Morley moved and had his being, yet to Alban Morley's heart (a heart not easily reached) no friend was so dear as Guy Darrell. They had entered Eton on the same day — left it the same day—lodged while there in the same house; and though of very different characters, formed one of those strong, imperishable, brotherly affections which the Fates weave into the very woof of existence.

Darrell's recommendation would have secured to any young *protégé* Colonel Morley's gracious welcome and invaluable advice. But both as Darrell's acknowledged kinsman and as Charles Haughton's son, Lionel called forth his kindliest sentiments, and obtained his most sagacious deliberations. He had already seen the boy several times before waiting on Mrs. Haughton, deeming it would please her to defer his visit until she could receive him in all the glories of Gloucester Place; and he had taken Lionel into high favor, and deemed him worthy of a conspicuous place in the world. Though Darrell, in his letter to Colonel Morley, had emphatically distinguished the position of Lionel, as a favored kinsman, from that of a presumptive or even a probable heir, yet the rich man had also added—"But I wish him to take rank as the representative to the Haughtons; and, whatever I may do with the bulk of my fortune, I shall insure to him a liberal independence. The completion of his education, the adequate allowance to him, the choice of a profession, are matters in which I entreat you to act for yourself, as if you were his guardian. I am leaving England—I may be abroad for years." Colonel Morley, in accepting the responsibilities thus pressed on him, brought to bear upon his charge subtle discrimination as well as conscientious anxiety.

He saw that Lionel's heart was set upon the military profession, and that his power of application seemed lukewarm and desultory when not cheered and concentred by enthusiasm, and would, therefore, fail him if directed to studies which had no immediate reference to the objects of his ambition. The Colonel accordingly dismissed the idea of sending him for three years to a University. Alban Morley summed up his theories on the collegiate ordeal in these succinct aphorisms: "Nothing so good as a University education, nor worse than a University without its education. Better throw a youth at once into the wider sphere of a capital, provided you there secure to his social life the ordinary checks of good company, the restraints imposed by the presence of decorous women, and men of grave years and dignified repute, than confine him to the exclusive society of youths of his own age — the age of wild spirits and unreflecting imitation — unless he cling to the safeguard which is found in hard reading, less by the book-knowledge it bestows than by the serious and preoccupied mind which it abstracts from the coarser temptations."

But Lionel, younger in character than in years, was too boyish as yet to be safely consigned to those trials of tact and temper which await the neophyte who enters on life through the doors of a mess-room. His pride was too morbid—too much on the alert for offense; his frankness too crude, his spirit too untamed by the insensible discipline of social commerce.

Quoth the observant Man of the World: "Place his honor in his own keeping, and he will carry it about with him on full cock, to blow off a friend's head or his own before the end of the first month. Huffy—decidedly huffy. And of all causes that disturb regiments, and induce court-martials, the commonest cause is a huffy lad! Pity! for that youngster has in him the right metal — spirit and talent that should make him a first-rate soldier. It would be time well spent, that should join professional studies with that degree of polite culture which gives dignity and cures *huffiness*. I must get him out of London, out of England — cut him off from his mother's apron-strings, and the particular friends of his poor father who prowl unannounced into the widow's drawing-room. He shall go to Paris—no better place to learn military theories, and be civilized out of huffy dispositions. No doubt my old friend, the chevalier, who has the art strategic at his finger-ends, might be induced to take him *en pension*, direct his studies, and keep him out of harm's way. I can secure to him the *entrée* into the circles of the rigid old Faubourg St. Germain, where manners are best bred, and household ties most respected. Besides, as I am so often at Paris myself, I shall have him under my eye; and a few years there spent in completing him as man may bring him nearer to that marshal's baton which every recruit should have in his eye, than if I started him at once, a raw boy, unable to take care of himself as an ensign, and unfitted, save by mechanical routine, to take care of others, should he live to buy the grade of a colonel."

The plans thus promptly formed Alban Morley briefly explained to Lionel, when the boy came to breakfast in Curzon Street, requesting him to obtain Mrs. Haughton's acquiescence in that exercise of the discretionary powers with which he had been invested by Mr. Darrell. To Lionel the proposition that commended the very studies to which his tastes directed his ambition, and placed his initiation into responsible manhood among scenes bright to his fancy, because new to his experience, seemed, of course, the perfection of wisdom.

Less readily pleased was poor Mrs. Haughton when her son returned to communicate the arrangement, backing a polite and well-worded letter from the Colonel with his own more artless eloquence. Instantly she flew off on the wing of her "little tempers." "What! her only son taken from her—sent to that horrid Continent, just when she was so respectably set-

tled! What was the good of money if she was to be parted from her boy? Mr. Darrell might take the money back if he pleased—she would write and tell him so. Colonel Morley had no feeling; and she was shocked to think Lionel was in such unnatural hands. She saw very plainly that he no longer cared for her—a serpent's tooth, etc., etc." But as soon as the burst was over the sky cleared, and Mrs. Haughton became penitent and sensible. Then her grief for Lionel's loss was diverted by preparations for his departure. There was his wardrobe to see to—a patent portmanteau to purchase and to fill. And, all done, the last evening mother and son spent together, though painful at the moment, it would be happiness for both hereafter to recall! Their hands clasped in each other — her head leaning on his young shoulder — her tears kissed so soothingly away. And soft words of kindly, motherly counsel—sweet promises of filial performance. Happy, thrice happy, as an after remembrance, be the final parting between hopeful son and fearful parent, at the foot of that mystic bridge which starts from the threshold of Home—lost in the dimness of the far-opposing shore!—bridge over which goes the boy who will never return but as the man.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pocket-Cannibal baits his woman's trap with love-letters—And a widow allured steals timidly toward it from under the weeds.

Jasper Losely is beginning to be hard up! The infallible calculation at *rouge-et-noir* has carried off all that capital which had accumulated from the savings of the young gentlemen whom Dolly Poole had contributed to his exchequer. Poole himself is beset by duns, and pathetically observes "that he has lost three stone in weight, and that he believes the calves to his legs are gone to enlarge his liver."

Jasper is compelled to put down his cabriolet—to discharge his groom—to retire from his fashionable lodgings; and just when the prospect even of a dinner becomes dim, he bethinks himself of Arabella Crane, and remembers that she promised him £5, nay, £10, which are still due from her. He calls—he is received like the prodigal son. Nay, to his own surprise, he finds Mrs. Crane has made her house much more inviting—the drawing-rooms are cleaned up; the addition of a few easy articles of furniture gives them quite a comfortable air. She herself has improved in costume—though her favorite color still remains iron-gray. She informs Jasper that she fully expected him—that these preparations are in his honor—that she has engaged a very good cook—that she hopes he will dine with her when not better engaged; in short, let him feel himself at home in Podden Place.

Jasper at first suspected a sinister design, under civilities that his conscience told him were unmerited—a design to entrap him into that matrimonial alliance which he had so ungallantly scented, and from which he still recoiled with an abhorrence which man is not justified in feeling for any connubial partner less preternaturally terrific than the Witch of Endor or the Bleeding Nun!

But Mrs. Crane quickly and candidly hastened to dispel his ungenerous apprehensions. "She had given up," she said, "all ideas so preposterous—love and wedlock were equally out of her mind. But ill as he had behaved to her, she could not but feel a sincere regard for him—a deep interest in his fate. He ought still to make a brilliant marriage—did that idea not occur to him? She might help him there with her woman's wit. In short," said Mrs. Crane, pinching her lips, "in short, Jasper, I feel for you as a *mother*. Look on me as such!"

That pure and affectionate notion wonderfully tickled, and egregiously delighted Jasper Losely. "Look on you as a mother! I will," said he, with emphasis. "Best of creatures!" And though in his own mind he had not a doubt that she still adored him (not as a mother), he believed it was a disinterested, devoted adoration, such as the beautiful brute really had inspired more than once in his abominable life. Accordingly, he moved into the neighborhood of Podden Place, contenting himself with a second-floor bedroom in a house recommended to him by Mrs. Crane, and taking his meals at his adopted mother's with filial familiarity. She expressed a desire to make Mr. Poole's acquaintance — Jasper hastened to present that worthy. Mrs. Crane invited Samuel Dolly to dine one day, to sup the next; she lent him £3 to redeem his dress-coat from pawn, and she gave him medicaments for the relief of his headache.

Samuel Dolly venerated her as a most superior woman—envied Jasper such a "mother." Thus easily did Arabella Crane possess herself of the existence of Jasper Losely. Lightly her fingers closed over it—lightly as the fisherman's over the captivated trout. And whatever her generosity, it was not carried to imprudence. She just gave to Jasper enough to bring him within her power—she had no idea of ruining herself by larger supplies—she concealed from him the extent of her income (which was in chief part derived from house rents), the amount of her savings, even the name of her banker. And if he carried off to the *rouge-et-noir* table the coins he obtained from her, and came for more, Mrs. Crane put on the look of a mother incensed—mild but awful—and scolded as mothers sometimes can scold. Jasper Losely began to be frightened at Mrs. Crane's scoldings. And he had not that power over her, which, though arrogated by a lover, is denied to an adopted son. His mind, relieved from the habitual distraction of the gambling-table—for which the resource was wanting—settled with redoubled ardor on the image of Mrs. Haughton. He had called at her house several times since the fatal day on which he had met there Colonel Morley, but Mrs. Haughton was never at home. And as, when the answer was given to him by the footman, he had more than once, on crossing the street, seen herself through the window, it was clear that his acquaintance was not courted. Jasper Losely, by habit, was the reverse of a pertinacious and troublesome suitor—not, Heaven knows, from want of audacity, but from excess of self-love. Where a lovelace so superb condescended to make overtures, a Clarissa so tasteless as to decline them deserved and experienced his contempt. Besides, steadfast

and prolonged pursuit of any object, however important and attractive, was alien to the levity and fickleness of his temper. But in this instance he had other motives than those on the surface for unusual perseverance.

A man like Jasper Losely never reposes implicit confidence in any one. He is garrulous, indiscreet—lets out much that Machiavel would have advised him not to disclose; but he invariably has nooks and corners in his mind which he keeps to himself. Jasper did not confide to his adopted mother his designs upon his intended bride. But she knew them through Poole, to whom he was more frank; and when she saw him looking over her select and severe library—taking therefrom the *Polite Letter-Writer* and the *Elegant Extracts*, Mrs. Crane divined at once that Jasper Losely was meditating the effect of epistolary seduction upon the widow of Gloucester Place.

Jasper did not write a bad love-letter in the florid style. He had at his command, in especial, certain poetical quotations, the effect of which repeated experience had assured him to be as potent upon the female breast as the incantations or *Carmina* of the ancient sorcery. The following in particular:

> "Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
> I ne'er could injure you."

Another—generally to be applied when confessing that his career had been interestingly wild, and would, if pity were denied him, be pathetically short:

> "When he who adores thee has left but the name
> Of his faults and his follies behind."

Armed with these quotations—many a sentence from the *Polite Letter-Writer* or the *Elegant Extracts*—and a quire of rose-edged paper, Losely sat down to Ovidian composition. But as he approached the close of Epistle the First, it occurred to him that a signature and address were necessary. The address not difficult. He could give Poole's (hence his confidence to that gentleman)—Poole had a lodging in Bury Street, St. James, a fashionable locality for single men. But the name required more consideration. There were insuperable objections against signing his own to any person who might be in communication with Mr. Darrell—a pity, for there was a good old family of the name of Losely. A name of aristocratic sound might indeed be readily borrowed from any lordly proprietor thereof without asking a formal consent. But this loan was exposed to danger. Mrs. Haughton might very naturally mention such name, as borne by her husband's friend, to Colonel Morley, and Colonel Morley would most probably know enough of the connections and relations of any peer so honored to say, "There is no such Greville, Cavendish, or Talbot." But Jasper Losely was not without fertility of invention and readiness of resource. A grand idea, worthy of a master, and proving that, if the man had not been a rogue in grain, he could have been reared into a very clever politician, flashed across him. He would sign himself "Smith." Nobody could say there is no such Smith; nobody could say that a Smith might not be a most respectable, fashionable, highly connected man. There are Smiths who are millionaires—Smiths who are large-acred squires—substantial baronets—peers of England, and pillars of the State—members even of the British Cabinet. You can no more question a man's right to be a Smith than his right to be a Briton; and wide as the diversity of rank, lineage, virtue, and genius in Britons, is the diversity in Smiths. But still a name so generic often affects a definitive precursor. Jasper signed himself "J. Courtenay Smith."

He called, and left Epistle the First with his own kid-gloved hand, inquiring first if Mrs. Haughton were at home, and, responded to in the negative, this time, he asked for her son. "Her son was gone abroad with Colonel Morley." Jasper, though sorry to lose present hold over the boy, was consoled at learning that the Colonel was off the ground. More sanguine of success, he glanced up at the window, and, sure that Mrs. Haughton was there, though he saw her not, lifted his hat with as melancholy an expression of reproach as he could throw into his face.

The villain could not have found a moment in Mrs. Haughton's widowed life so propitious to his chance of success. In her lodging-house at Pimlico, the good lady had been too incessantly occupied for that idle train of reverie in which, the poets assure us, that Cupid finds leisure to whet his arrows, and take his aim. Had Lionel still been by her side—had even Colonel Morley been in town—her affection for the one, her awe of the other, would have been her safeguards. But alone in that fine new house—no friends, no acquaintances as yet—no dear visiting circle on which to expend the desire of talk and the zest for innocent excitement that are natural to ladies of an active mind and a nervous temperament, the sudden obtrusion of a suitor so respectfully ardent—oh, it is not to be denied that the temptation was immense!

And when that note, so neatly folded—so elegantly sealed—lay in her irresolute hand, the widow could not but feel that she was still young, still pretty; and her heart flew back to the day when the linen-draper's fair daughter had been the cynosure of the provincial High Street—when young officers had lounged to and fro the pavement, looking in at her window—when ogles and notes had alike beset her, and the dark eyes of the irresistible Charlie Haughton had first taught her pulse to tremble. And in her hand lies the letter of Charlie Haughton's particular friend. She breaks the seal. She reads—a declaration!

Five letters in five days did Jasper write. In the course of those letters, he explains away the causes for suspicion which Colonel Morley had so ungenerously suggested. He is no longer anonymous—he is J. Courtenay Smith. He alludes incidentally to the precocious age in which he had become "lord of himself, that heritage of woe." This accounts for his friendship with a man so much his senior as the late Charlie. He confesses that, in the vortex of dissipation, his hereditary estates have disappeared; but he has still a genteel independence; and with the woman of his heart, etc., etc. He had never before known what real love was, etc. "Pleasure had fired his maddening soul;" "but the heart—the heart been lonely still." He entreated only a personal interview, even though to be rejected—scorned. Still, when "he who adored her had left but the name," etc., etc.

Alas! alas! as Mrs. Haughton put down Epistle the Fifth, she hesitated; and the woman who hesitates in such a case, is sure, at least—to write a civil answer.

Mrs. Haughton wrote but three lines—still they *were* civil—and conceded an interview for the next day, though implying that it was but for the purpose of assuring Mr. J. Courtenay Smith in person, of her unalterable fidelity to the shade of his lamented friend.

In high glee Jasper showed Mrs. Haughton's answer to Dolly Poole, and began seriously to speculate on the probable amount of the widow's income, and the value of her movables in Gloucester Place. Thence he repaired to Mrs. Crane; and, emboldened by the hope forever to escape from maternal tutelage, braved her scoldings, and asked for a couple of sovereigns. He was sure that he should be in luck that night. She gave to him the sum and spared the scoldings. But as soon as he was gone, conjecturing, from the bravado of his manner, what had really occurred, Mrs. Crane put on her bonnet and went out.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unhappy is the man who puts his trust in—a woman.

Late that evening a lady, in a black vail, knocked at No. — Gloucester Place, and asked to see Mrs. Haughton on urgent business. She was admitted. She remained but five minutes.

The next day, when "gay as a bridegroom prancing to his bride," Jasper Losely presented himself at the widow's door, the servant placed in his hand a packet, and informed him bluffly that Mrs. Haughton had gone out of town. Jasper with difficulty suppressed his rage, opened the packet—his own letters returned, with these words—"Sir, your name is not Courtenay Smith. If you trouble me again I shall apply to the police." Never from female hand had Jasper Losely's pride received such a slap on its face. He was literally stunned. Mechanically he hastened to Arabella Crane; and having no longer any object in concealment, but, on the contrary, a most urgent craving for sympathy, he poured forth his indignation and wrongs. No mother could be more consolatory than Mrs. Crane. She soothed, she flattered, she gave him an excellent dinner; after which she made him so comfortable—what with an easy-chair and complimentary converse, that, when Jasper rose late to return to his lodging, he said: "After all, if I had been ugly and stupid, and of a weakly constitution, I should have been of a very domestic turn of mind."

CHAPTER XIV.

No Author ever drew a character, consistent to human nature, but what he was forced to ascribe to it many inconsistencies.

Whether moved by that pathetic speech of Jasper's, or by some other impulse not less feminine, Arabella Crane seemed suddenly to conceive the laudable and arduous design of reforming that portentous sinner. She had some distant relations in London, whom she very rarely troubled with a visit, and who, had she wanted any thing from them, would have shut their doors in her face; but as, on the contrary, she was well off, single, and might leave her money to whom she pleased, the distant relations were always warm in manner, and prodigal in their offers of service. The next day she repaired to one of these kinsfolk—a person in a large way of business—and returned home with two great books in white sheepskin. And when Losely looked in to dine, she said, in the suavest tones a tender mother can address to an amiable truant, "Jasper, you have great abilities—at the gaming-table abilities are evidently useless—your forte is calculation—you were always very quick at that. I have been fortunate enough to procure you an easy piece of taskwork, for which you will be liberally remunerated. A friend of mine wishes to submit these books to a regular accountant; he suspects that a clerk has cheated him, but he can not tell how or where. You know accounts thoroughly—no one better—and the pay will be ten guineas."

Jasper, though his early life had rendered familiar and facile to him the science of book-keeping and double-entry, made a grimace at the revolting idea of any honest labor, however light and well paid. But ten guineas were an immense temptation, and in the evening Mrs. Crane coaxed him into the task.

Neglecting no feminine art to make the lawless nomad feel at home under her roof, she had provided for his ease and comfort morocco slippers and a superb dressing-robe, in material rich, in color becoming. Men, single or marital, are accustomed to connect the idea of home with dressing-gown and slippers, especially if, after dinner, they apply (as Jasper Losely now applied) to occupations, in which the brain is active, the form in repose. What achievement, literary or scientific, was ever accomplished by a student strapped to unyielding boots, and "cabined, cribbed, confined," in a coat that fits him like wax? As robed in the cozy garment which is consecrated to the sacred familiar Lares, the relaxing, handsome ruffian sate in the quiet room, bending his still regular profile over the sheepskin books—the harmless pen in that strong well-shaped hand, Mrs. Crane watched him with a softening countenance. To bear him company, she had actively taken herself to work—the gold thimble dragged from its long repose—marking and hemming, with nimble artistic fingers, new cravats for the adopted son! Strange creature is Woman! Ungrateful and perfidious as that sleek tiger before her had often proved himself—though no man could less deserve one kindly sentiment in a female heart—though she knew that he cared nothing for her, still it was pleasing to know that he cared for nobody else—that he was sitting in the same room—and Arabella Crane felt that if that existence could continue she could forget the past, and look contented toward the future. Again I say, strange creature is Woman!—and, in this instance, creature more strange, because so grim! But as her eyes soften, and her fingers work, and her mind revolves schemes for making that lawless wild beast an innocuous, tame animal, who can help feeling for and with grim Arabella Crane?

Poor woman! And will not the experiment succeed? Three evenings does Jasper Losely

devote to this sinless life and its peaceful occupation. He completes his task—he receives the ten guineas. (How much of that fee came out of Mrs. Crane's privy purse?) He detects three mistakes, which justify suspicion of the bookkeeper's integrity. Set a thief to catch a thief! He is praised for acuteness, and promised a still lighter employment, to be still better paid. He departs, declaring that he will come the next day, earlier than usual—he volunteers an eulogium upon work in general—he vows that evenings so happy he has not spent for years; he leaves Mrs. Crane so much impressed by the hope of his improvement, that if a good clergyman had found her just at that moment, she might almost have been induced to pray. But—

"Heu quoties fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit!"

Jasper Losely returns not, neither to Podden Place nor to his lodging in the neighborhood. Days elapse; still he comes not; even Poole does not know where he has gone; even Poole has not seen him! But that latter worthy is now laid up with a serious rheumatic fever—confined to his room and water-gruel. And Jasper Losely is not the man to intrude himself on the privacy of a sick chamber. Mrs. Crane, more benevolent, visits Poole—cheers him up—gets him a nurse—writes to Uncle Sam. Poole blesses her. He hopes that Uncle Sam, moved by the spectacle of his sick bed, will say, "Don't let your debts fret you—I will pay them!" Whatever her disappointment or resentment at Jasper's thankless and mysterious evasion, Arabella Crane is calmly confident of his return. To her servant, Bridgett Greggs, who was perhaps the sole person in the world who entertained affection for the lone, gaunt woman, and who held Jasper Losely in profound detestation, she said, with tranquil sternness, "That man has crossed my life, and darkened it. He passed away, and left Night behind him. He has dared to return. He shall never escape me again till the grave yawn for one of us."

"But, Lor' love you, miss, you would not put yourself in the power of such a black-hearted villing?"

"In *his* power! No, Bridgett; fear not, he must be in mine—sooner or later in mine—hand and foot. Patience!"

As she was thus speaking—a knock at the door—"It is he—I told you so—quick!"

But it was not Jasper Losely. It was Mr. Rugge.

CHAPTER XV.

"When God wills, all winds bring rain."—*Ancient Proverb.*

The manager had not submitted to the loss of his property in Sophy and £100, without taking much vain trouble to recover the one or the other. He had visited Jasper while that gentleman lodged in St. James's, but the moment he hinted at the return of the £100, Mr. Losely opened both door and window, and requested the manager to make his immediate choice of the two. Taking the more usual mode of exit, Mr. Rugge vented his just indignation in a lawyer's letter, threatening Mr. Losely with an action for conspiracy and fraud. He had also more than once visited Mrs. Crane, who somewhat soothed him by allowing that he had been very badly used, that he ought at least to be repaid his money, and promising to do her best to persuade Mr. Losely to "behave like a gentleman." With regard to Sophy herself, Mrs. Crane appeared to feel a profound indifference. In fact, the hatred which Mrs. Crane had unquestionably conceived for Sophy while under her charge, was much diminished by Losely's unnatural conduct toward the child. To her it was probably a matter of no interest whether Sophy was in Rugge's hands or Waife's; enough for her that the daughter of a woman against whose memory her fiercest passions were enlisted was, in either case, so far below herself in the grades of the social ladder.

Perhaps of the two protectors for Sophy—Rugge and Waife—her spite alone would have given the preference to Waife. He was on a still lower step of the ladder than the itinerant manager. Nor, though she had so mortally injured the forlorn cripple in the eyes of Mr. Hartopp, had she any deliberate purpose of revenge to gratify against *him!* On the contrary, if she viewed him with contempt, it was a contempt not unmixed with pity. It was necessary to make to the mayor the communications she had made, or that worthy magistrate would not have surrendered the child intrusted to him, at least until Waife's return. And really it was a kindness to the old man to save him both from an agonizing scene with Jasper, and from the more public opprobrium which any resistance on his part to Jasper's authority, or any altercation between the two, would occasion. And as her main object then was to secure Losely's allegiance to her, by proving her power to be useful to him, so Waifes, and Sophys, and Mayors, and Managers, were to her but as pawns to be moved and sacrificed, according to the leading strategy of her game.

Rugge came now, agitated and breathless, to inform Mrs. Crane that Waife had been seen in London. Mr. Rugge's clown had seen him, not far from the Tower; but the cripple had disappeared before the clown, who was on the top of an omnibus, had time to descend. "And even if he had actually caught hold of Mr. Waife," observed Mrs. Crane, "what then? You have no claim on Mr. Waife."

"But the Phenomenon must be with that ravishing marauder," said Rugge. "However, I have set a minister of justice, that is, ma'am, a detective police, at work; and what I now ask of you is simply this—should it be necessary for Mr. Losely to appear with me before the senate, that is to say, ma'am, a metropolitan police court, in order to prove my legal property in my own bought and paid-for Phenomenon, will you induce that bold, bad man, not again to return the poisoned chalice to my lips?"

"I do not even know where Mr. Losely is—perhaps not in London."

"Ma'am, I saw him last night at the theatre—Princess's. I was in the shilling gallery. He who owes me £100, ma'am—he in a private box!"

"Ah! you are sure; by himself?"

"With a lady, ma'am—a lady in a shawl from Ingee. I know them shawls. My father taught me to know them in early childhood, for he was an ornament to British commerce—a broker,

ma'am—pawn! And," continued Rugge, with a withering smile, "that man in a private box, which at the Princess's costs two pounds two, and with the spoils of Ingee by his side, lifted his eye-glass and beheld me; me in the shilling gallery, and his conscience did not say 'should we not change places if I paid that gentleman £100?' Can such things be, and overcome us, ma'am, like a summer-cloud, without our special—I put it to you, ma'am—wonder?"

"Oh, with a lady, was he!" exclaimed Arabella Crane; her wrath, which, while the manager spoke, gathered fast and full, bursting now into words—"His ladies shall know the man who sells his own child for a show; only find out where the girl is, then come here again before you stir further. Oh, with a lady! Go to your detective policeman, or, rather, send him to me; we will first discover Mr. Losely's address. I will pay all the expenses. Rely on my zeal, Mr. Rugge."

Much comforted, the manager went his way. He had not been long gone before Jasper himself appeared. The traitor entered with a more than customary bravado of manner, as if he apprehended a scolding, and was prepared to face it; but Mrs. Crane neither reproached him for his prolonged absence, nor expressed surprise at his return. With true feminine duplicity she received him as if nothing had happened. Jasper, thus relieved, became of his own accord apologetic and explanatory; evidently he wanted something of Mrs. Crane. "The fact is, my dear friend," said he, sinking into a chair, "that the day after I last saw you, I happened to go to the General Post-office to see if there were any letters for me—you smile, you don't believe me. Honor bright—here they are," and Jasper took from the side-pocket of his coat a pocket-book—a new pocket-book—a brilliant pocket-book—fragrant Russian leather—delicately embossed—golden clasps—silken linings—jeweled pencil-case—malachite penknife—an arsenal of nick-nacks stored in neat recesses; such a pocket-book as no man ever gives to himself. Sardanapalus would not have given that pocket-book to himself! Such a pocket-book never comes to you, oh, enviable Lotharios, save as tributary keepsakes from the charmers who adore you! Grimly the Adopted Mother eyed that pocket-book. Never had she seen it before. Grimly she pinched her lips. Out of this dainty volume—which would have been of cumbrous size to a slim thread-paper exquisite, but scarcely bulged into ripple the Atlantic expanse of Jasper Losely's magnificent chest—the monster drew forth two letters on French paper—foreign post-marks. He replaced them quickly, only suffering her eye to glance at the address, and continued: "Fancy! that purse-proud Grand Turk of an infidel, though he would not believe me, has been to France—yes, actually to * * * * *—making inquiries evidently with reference to Sophy. The woman who ought to have thoroughly converted him took flight, however, and missed seeing him. Confound her! I ought to have been there. So I have no doubt for the present the Pagan remains stubborn. Gone on into Italy, I hear; doing me, violating the laws of nature, and roving about the world with his own solitary hands in his bottomless pockets, like the Wandering Jew! But, as some slight set-off in my run of ill-luck, I find at the Post-office a pleasanter letter than the one which brings me this news: A rich elderly lady, who has no family, wants to adopt a nice child, will take Sophy; make it worth my while to let her have Sophy. 'Tis convenient in a thousand ways to settle one's child comfortably in a rich house—establishes rights, subject, of course, to *cheques* which would not affront *me*—a Father! But the first thing requisite is to catch Sophy; 'tis in that I ask your help—you are so clever. Best of creatures! what could I do without you? As you say, whenever I want a friend I come to you—Bella!"

Mrs. Crane surveyed Jasper's face deliberately. It is strange how much more readily women read the thoughts of men than men detect those of women. "You know where the child is," said she, slowly.

"Well, I take it for granted she is with the old man; and I have seen him—seen him yesterday."

"Go on; you saw him—where?"

"Near London Bridge."

"What business could you possibly have in that direction? Ah! I guess, the railway-station—to Dover—you are going abroad?"

"No such thing—you are so horridly suspicious. But it is true I had been to the station inquiring after some luggage or parcels which a friend of mine had ordered to be left there—now, don't interrupt me. At the foot of the bridge I caught a sudden glimpse of the old man—changed—altered—aged—one eye lost. You had said I should not know him again, but I did; I should never have recognized his face. I knew him by the build of the shoulder, a certain turn of the arms—I don't know what; one knows a man familiar to one from birth without seeing his face. Oh, Bella! I declare that I felt as soft—as soft as the silliest muff who ever—" Jasper did not complete his comparison, but paused a moment, breathing hard, and then broke into another sentence. "He was selling something in a basket—matches, boot-straps, deuce knows what. He! a clever man, too! I should have liked to drop into that d—d basket all the money I had about me."

"Why did not you?"

"Why? How could I? He would have recognized me. There would have been a scene—a row—a flare up—a mob round us, I dare say. I had no idea it would so upset me; to see him selling matches, too; glad we did not meet at Gatesboro'. Not even for that £100 do I think I could have faced him. No—as he said when we last parted, 'The world is wide enough for both.' Give me some brandy—thank you."

"You did not speak to the old man—he did not see you—but you wanted to get back the child; you felt sure she must be with him; you followed him home?"

"I? No; I should have had to wait for hours. A man like me, loitering about London Bridge!—I should have been too conspicuous—he would have soon caught sight of me, though I kept on his blind side. I employed a ragged boy to watch and follow him, and here is the address. Now, will you get Sophy back for me without any trouble to me, without my appearing? I would rather charge a regiment of Horse Guards than bully that old man."

"Yet you would rob him of that child—his sole comfort?"

"Bother!" cried Losely, impatiently: "the child can be only a burden to him; well out of his way; 'tis for the sake of that child he is selling matches! It would be the greatest charity we could do him to set him free from that child sponging on him, dragging him down; without her he'd find a way to shift for himself. Why, he's even cleverer than I am! And there—there—give him this money, but don't say it came from me."

He thrust, without counting, several sovereigns—at least twelve or fourteen—into Mrs. Crane's palm; and so powerful a charm has goodness the very least, even in natures the most evil, that that unusual, eccentric, inconsistent gleam of human pity in Jasper Losely's benighted soul, shed its relenting influence over the angry, wrathful, and vindictive feelings with which Mrs. Crane the moment before regarded the perfidious miscreant; and she gazed at him with a sort of melancholy wonder. What! though so little sympathizing with affection that he could not comprehend that he was about to rob the old man of a comfort which no gold could repay—what! though so contemptuously callous to his own child—yet there in her hand lay the unmistakable token that a something of humanity, compunction, compassion, still lingered in the breast of the greedy cynic; and at that thought all that was softest in her own human nature moved toward him—indulgent—gentle. But in the rapid changes of the heart-feminine, the very sentiment that touched upon love brought back the jealousy that bordered upon hate. How came he by so much money? more than days ago, he, the insatiate spendthrift, had received for his taskwork? And that POCKET-BOOK!

"You have suddenly grown rich, Jasper?"

For a moment he looked confused, but replied, as he re-helped himself to the brandy, "Yes, *rouge-et-noir*—luck. Now do go and see after this affair, that's a dear, good woman. Get the child to-day, if you can. I will call here in the evening."

"Should you take her, then, abroad at once to this worthy lady who will adopt her? If so, we shall meet, I suppose, no more; and I am assisting you to forget that I live still."

"Abroad—that crotchet of yours again. You are quite mistaken—in fact, the lady is in London. It was for her effects that I went to the station. Oh, don't be jealous—quite elderly."

"Jealous, my dear Jasper; you forget. I am as your mother. One of your letters, then, announced this lady's intended arrival. You were in correspondence with this—elderly lady?"

"Why, not exactly in correspondence. But when I left Paris I gave the General Post-office as my address to a few friends in France. And this lady, who took an interest in my affairs (ladies, whether old or young, who have once known me, always do), was aware that I had expectations with respect to the child. So, some days ago, when I was so badly off, I wrote a line to tell her that Sophy had been no go, and that but for a dear friend (that is you) I might be on the *pavé*. In her answer, she said she should be in London as soon as I received her letter; and gave me an address here at which to learn where to find her when arrived—a good old soul, but strange to London. I have been very busy, helping her to find a house, recommending tradesmen, and so forth. She likes style, and can afford it. A pleasant house enough; but our quiet evenings here spoil me for any thing else. Now get on your bonnet, and let me see you off."

"On one condition, my dear Jasper; that you stay here till I return."

Jasper made a wry face. But, as it was near dinner-time, and he never wanted for appetite, he at length agreed to employ the interval of her absence in discussing a meal, which experience had told him Mrs. Crane's new cook would, not unskillfully, though hastily, prepare. Mrs. Crane left him to order the dinner, and put on her shawl and bonnet. But, gaining her own room, she rung for Bridgett Greggs; and when that confidential servant appeared, she said: "In the side-pocket of Mr. Losely's coat there is a POCKET-BOOK; in it there are some letters which I must see. I shall appear to go out, leave the street-door ajar, that I may slip in again unobserved. You will serve dinner as soon as possible. And when Mr. Losely, as usual, exchanges his coat for the dressing-gown, contrive to take out that pocket-book unobserved by him. Bring it to me here, in this room: you can as easily replace it afterward. A moment will suffice to my purpose."

Bridgett nodded, and understood. Jasper, standing by the window, saw Mrs. Crane leave the house, walking briskly. He then threw himself on the sofa, and began to doze: the doze deepened, and became sleep. Bridgett, entering to lay the cloth, so found him. She approached on tiptoe—sniffed the perfume of the pocket-book—saw its gilded corners peep forth from its lair. She hesitated—she trembled—she was in mortal fear of that truculent slumberer; but sleep lessens the awe thieves feel, or heroes inspire. She has taken the pocket-book—she has fled with the booty—she is in Mrs. Crane's apartment, not five minutes after Mrs. Crane has regained its threshold.

Rapidly the jealous woman ransacked the pocket-book—started to see, elegantly worked with gold threads, in the lining, the words, "SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE"—no other letters, save the two, of which Jasper had vouchsafed to her but the glimpse. Over these she hurried her glittering eyes; and when she restored them to their place, and gave back the book to Bridgett, who stood by, breathless and listening, lest Jasper should awake, her face was colorless, and a kind of shudder seemed to come over her. Left alone, she rested her face on her hand, her lips moving as if in self-commune. Then noiselessly she glided down the stairs, regained the street, and hurried fast upon her way.

Bridgett was not in time to restore the book to Jasper's pocket, for when she re-entered he was turning round and stretching himself between sleep and waking. But she dropped the book skillfully on the floor, close beside the sofa; it would seem to him, on waking, to have fallen out of the pocket in the natural movements of sleep.

And in fact, when he rose, dinner now on the table, he picked up the pocket-book without suspicion. But it was lucky that Bridgett had not

waited for the opportunity suggested by her mistress. For when Jasper put on the dressing-gown, he observed that his coat wanted brushing; and, in giving it to the servant for that purpose, he used the precaution of taking out the pocket-book, and placing it in some other receptacle of his dress.

Mrs. Crane returned in less than two hours —returned with a disappointed look, which at once prepared Jasper for the intelligence that the birds to be entrapped had flown.

"They went away this afternoon," said Mrs. Crane, tossing Jasper's sovereigns on the table, as if they burned her fingers. "But leave the fugitives to me. I will find them."

Jasper relieved his angry mind by a series of guilty but meaningless expletives; and then, seeing no farther use to which Mrs. Crane's wits could be applied at present, finished the remainder of her brandy, and wished her good-night, with a promise to call again, but without any intimation of his own address. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Crane once more summoned Bridgett.

"You told me last week that your brother-in-law, Simpson, wished to go to America, that he had the offer of employment there, but that he could not afford the fare of the voyage. I promised I would help him if it was a service to you."

"You are a hangel, Miss!" exclaimed Bridgett, dropping a low courtesy — so low that it seemed as if she was going on her knees. "And may you have your deserts in the next blessed world, where there are no black-hearted villings."

"Enough, enough," said Mrs. Crane, recoiling, perhaps, from that grateful benediction. "You have been faithful to me, as none else have ever been; but this time I do not serve you in return so much as I meant to do. The service is reciprocal, if your brother-in-law will do me a favor. He takes with him his daughter, a mere child. Bridgett, let them enter their names on the steam-vessel as William and Sophy Waife; they can, of course, resume their own name when the voyage is over. There is the fare for them, and something more. Pooh, no thanks. I can spare the money. See your brother-in-law the first thing in the morning; and remember they go by the next vessel, which sails from Liverpool on Thursday."

CHAPTER XVI.

Those poor Pocket Cannibals, how society does persecute them! Even a menial servant would give warning if disturbed at his meals. But your Man-eater is the meekest of creatures; he will never give warning, and —not often take it.

Whatever the source that had supplied Jasper Losely with the money, from which he had so generously extracted the sovereigns intended to console Waife for the loss of Sophy, that source either dried up, or became wholly inadequate to his wants. For elasticity was the felicitous peculiarity of Mr. Losely's wants. They accommodated themselves to the state of his finances with mathematical precision, always requiring exactly five times the amount of the means placed at his disposal. From a shilling to a million, multiply his wants by five times the total of his means, and you arrived at a just conclusion. Jasper called upon Poole, who was slowly recovering, but unable to leave his room; and finding that gentleman in a more melancholy state of mind than usual, occasioned by Uncle Sam's brutal declaration, that "if responsible for his godson's sins, he was not responsible for his debts;" and that he really thought "the best thing Samuel Dolly could do was to go to prison for a short time, and get whitewashed;" Jasper began to lament his own hard fate: "And just when one of the finest women in Paris has come here on purpose to see me," said the lady-killer; "a lady who keeps her carriage, Dolly! Would have introduced you if you had been well enough to go out. One can't be always borrowing of her. I wish one could. There's Mother Crane would sell her gown off her back for me, but, 'Gad, Sir, she snubs, and positively frightens me. Besides, she lays traps to demean me —set me to work like a clerk (not that I would hurt your feelings, Dolly. If you are a clerk, or something of that sort, you are a gentleman at heart). Well, then, we are both done up and cleaned out; and my decided opinion is, that nothing is left but a bold stroke."

"I have no objection to bold strokes, but I don't see any; and Uncle Sam's bold stroke of the Fleet Prison is not at all to my taste."

"Fleet Prison! Fleet fiddlestick! No. You have never been in Russia? Why should we not go there both? My Paris friend, Madame Caumartin, was going to Italy, but her plans are changed, and she is now all for St. Petersburg. She will wait a few days for you to get well. We will all go together and enjoy ourselves. The Russians doat upon whist. We shall get into their swell sets, and live like princes." Therewith Jasper launched forth on the text of Russian existence, in such glowing terms, that Dolly Poole shut his aching eyes, and fancied himself sledging down the Neva, covered with furs—a countess waiting for him at dinner, and counts in dozens ready to offer bets, to a fabulous amount, that Jasper Losely lost the rubber.

Having lifted his friend into this region of aerial castles, Jasper then, descending into the practical world, wound up with the mournful fact that one could not get to Petersburg, nor, when there, into swell sets, without having some little capital on hand.

"I tell you what we will do. Madame Caumartin lives in prime style. Get old Latham, your employer, to discount her bill at three months' date, for £500, and we will all be off in a crack." Poole shook his head. "Old Latham is too knowing a file for that—a foreigner! He'd want security."

"I'll be security."

Dolly shook his head a second time, still more emphatically than the first.

"But you say he does discount paper — gets rich on it?"

"Yes, gets rich on it, which he might not do if he discounted the paper you propose. No offense."

"Oh, no offense among friends! You have taken him bills which he has discounted?"

"Yes, good paper."

"Any paper signed by good names is good

paper. We can sign good names if we know their handwritings."

Dolly started and turned white. Knave he was—cheat at cards, blackleg on the turf—but forgery! that crime was new to him. The very notion of it brought on a return of fever. And while Jasper was increasing his malady by arguing with his apprehensions, luckily for Poole, Uncle Sam came in. Uncle Sam, a sagacious old tradesman, no sooner clapped eyes on the brilliant Losely than he conceived for him a distrustful repugnance, similar to that with which an experienced gander may regard a fox in colloquy with its gosling. He had already learned enough of his godson's ways and chosen society to be assured that Samuel Dolly had indulged in very anti-commercial tastes, and been sadly contaminated by very anti-commercial friends. He felt persuaded that Dolly's sole chance of redemption was in working on his mind while his body was still suffering, so that Poole might, on recovery, break with all former associations. On seeing Jasper in the dress of an exquisite, with the thews of a prize-fighter, Uncle Sam saw the stalwart incarnation of all the sins which a godfather had vowed that a godson should renounce. Accordingly, he made himself so disagreeable, that Losely, in great disgust, took a hasty departure. And Uncle Sam, as he helped the nurse to plunge Dolly into his bed, had the brutality to tell his nephew, in very plain terms, that if ever he found that Brummagem gent in Poole's rooms again, Poole would never again see the color of Uncle Sam's money. Dolly beginning to blubber, the good man, relenting, patted him on the back, and said, "But as soon as you are well, I'll carry you with me to my country box, and keep you out of harm's way till I find you a wife, who will comb your head for you!"—at which cheering prospect Poole blubbered more dolefully than before. On retiring to his own lodging in the Gloucester coffee-house, Uncle Sam, to make all sure, gave positive orders to Poole's landlady, who respected in Uncle Sam the man who might pay what Poole owed to her, on no account to let in any of Dolly's profligate friends, but especially the chap he had found there; adding, "'Tis as much as my nephew's life is worth, and, what is more to the purpose, as much as your bill is." Accordingly, when Jasper presented himself at Poole's door again that very evening, the landlady apprised him of her orders; and, proof to his insinuating remonstrances, closed the door in his face. But a French chronicler has recorded that, when Henry IV. was besieging Paris, though not a loaf of bread could enter the walls, love-letters passed between city and camp as easily as if there had been no siege at all. And does not Mercury preside over money as well as love? Jasper, spurred on by Madame Caumartin, who was exceedingly anxious to exchange London for Petersburg as soon as possible, maintained a close and frequent correspondence with Poole by the agency of the nurse, who luckily was not above being bribed by shillings. Poole continued to reject the villainy proposed by Jasper; but, in the course of the correspondence, he threw out, rather incoherently—for his mind began somewhat to wander—a scheme equally flagitious, which Jasper, aided perhaps by Madame Caumartin's yet keener wit, caught up, and quickly reduced to deliberate method. Old Mr. Latham, among the bills he discounted, kept those of such more bashful customers as stipulated that their resort to temporary accommodation should be maintained a profound secret in his own safe. Among these bills Poole knew that there was one for £1000, given by a young nobleman of immense estates, but so entailed that he could neither sell nor mortgage, and therefore often in need of a few hundreds for pocket-money. The nobleman's name stood high. His fortune was universally known; his honor unimpeachable. A bill of his any one would cash at sight. Could Poole but obtain that bill! It had, he believed, only a few weeks yet to run. Jasper or Madame Caumartin might get it discounted even by Lord ——'s own banker; and if that were too bold, by any professional bill-broker; and all three be off before a suspicion could arise. But to get at that safe a false key might be necessary. Poole suggested a waxen impression of the lock. Jasper sent him a readier contrivance—a queer-looking tool that looked an instrument of torture. All now necessary was for Poole to recover sufficiently to return to business, and to get rid of Uncle Sam by a promise to run down to the country the moment Poole had conscientiously cleared some necessary arrears of work. While this correspondence went on, Jasper Losely shunned Mrs. Crane, and took his meals and spent his leisure hours with Madame Caumartin. He needed no dressing-gown and slippers to feel himself at home there. Madame Caumartin had really taken a showy house in a genteel street. Her own appearance was eminently what the French call *distinguée*. Dressed to perfection, from head to foot; neat and finished as an epigram. Her face, in shape like a thorough-bred cobra capella — low, smooth frontal, widening at the summit; chin tapering, but jaw strong; teeth marvelously white, small, and with points sharp as those in the maw of the fish called the "Sea Devil;" eyes like dark emeralds, of which the pupils, when she was angry or when she was scheming, retreated upward toward the temples, emitting a luminous green ray that shot through space like the gleam that escapes from a dark lantern; complexion superlatively feminine—call it not pale, but white, as if she lived on blanched almonds, peach-stones, and arsenic; hands so fine and so bloodless, with fingers so pointedly taper there seemed stings at their tips; manners of one who had ranged all ranks of society, from highest to lowest, and duped the most wary in each of them. Did she please it, a crown prince might have thought her youth must have passed in the chambers of porphyry! Did she please it, an old soldier would have sworn the creature had been a *vivandière*. In age, perhaps bordering on forty. She looked younger; but had she been a hundred and twenty she could not have been more wicked. Ah! happy, indeed, for Sophy, if it were to save her youth from ever being fostered in elegant boudoirs by those bloodless hands, that the crippled vagabond had borne her away from Arabella's less cruel unkindness; better far even Rugge's village stage; better far stealthy by-lanes, feigned names, and the erudite tricks of Sir Isaac!

But still it is due even to Jasper to state here that in Losely's recent design to transfer Sophy from Waife's care to that of Madame Caumartin, the Sharper harbored no idea of a villainy so execrable as the character of the *Parisienne* led the jealous Arabella to suspect. But his real object in getting the child, at that time, once more into his power was (whatever its nature) harmless compared with the mildest of Arabella's dark doubts. But still, if Sophy *had* been regained, and the object on regaining her foiled (as it probably would have been), what *then* might have become of her?—lost, perhaps, forever to Waife—in a foreign land, and under such guardianship? Grave question, which Jasper Losely, who exercised so little foresight in the paramount question, viz., what, some day or other, will become of himself, was not likely to rack his brains by conjecturing!

Meanwhile Mrs. Crane was vigilant. The detective police-officer, sent to her by Mr. Rugge, could not give her the information which Rugge desired, and which she did not longer need. She gave the detective some information respecting Madame Caumartin. One day, toward the evening, she was surprised by a visit from Uncle Sam. He called ostensibly to thank her for her kindness to his godson and nephew; and to beg her not to be offended if he had been rude to Mr. Losely, who, he understood from Dolly, was a particular friend of hers. "You see, ma'am, Samuel Dolly is a weak young man, and easily led astray; but, luckily for himself, he has no money and no stomach. So he may repent in time; and if I could find a wife to manage him, he has not a bad head for the main chance, and may become a practical man. Repeatedly I have told him he should go to prison, but that was only to frighten him—fact is, I want to get him safe down into the country, and he don't take to that. So I am forced to say, 'My box, home-brewed and south-down, Samuel Dolly, or a Lunnon jail, and debtors' allowance.' Must give a young man his choice, my dear lady."

Mrs. Crane, observing that what he said was extremely sensible, Uncle Sam warmed in his confidence.

"And I thought I had him, till I found Mr. Losely in his sick-room; but ever since that day, I don't know how it is, the lad has had something on his mind, which I don't half like — cracky, I think, my dear lady — cracky. I suspect that old nurse passes letters. I taxed her with it, and she immediately wanted to take her Bible-oath, and smelt of gin — two things which, taken together, look guilty."

"But," said Mrs. Crane, growing much interested, "if Mr. Losely and Mr. Poole do correspond, what then?"

"That's what I want to know, ma'am. Excuse me; I don't wish to disparage Mr. Losely —a dashing gent, and nothing worse, I dare say. But certain sure I am that he has put into Samuel Dolly's head something which has cracked it! There is the lad now up and dressed, when he ought to be in bed, and swearing he'll go to old Latham's to-morrow, and that long arrears of work are on his conscience! Never heard him talk of conscience before — that looks guilty! And it does not frighten him any longer when I say he shall go to prison for his debts; and he's very anxious to get me out of Lunnon; and when I threw in a word about Mr. Losely (slyly, my good lady—just to see its effect), he grew as white as that paper; and then he began strutting and swelling, and saying that Mr. Losely would be a great man, and that he should be a great man, and that he did not care for my money—he could get as much money as he liked. That looks guilty, my dear lady. And, oh," cried Uncle Sam, clasping his hands, "I do fear that he's thinking of something worse than he has ever done before, and his brain can't stand it. And, ma'am, he has a great respect for you; and you've a friendship for Mr. Losely. Now just suppose that Mr. Losely should have been thinking of what your flash sporting gents call a harmless spree, and my sister's son should, being cracky, construe it into something criminal. Oh, Mrs. Crane, do go and see Mr. Losely, and tell him that Samuel Dolly is not safe—is not safe!"

"Much better that I should go to your nephew," said Mrs. Crane; "and with your leave I will do so at once. Let me see him alone. Where shall I find you afterward?"

"At the Gloucester Coffee-house. Oh, my dear lady, how can I thank you enough. The boy can be nothing to you; but to me, he's my sister's son—the blackguard!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Dices laborantes in uno
Penelopen vitreamque Circen.—Horat.

Mrs. Crane found Poole in his little sitting-room, hung round with prints of opera-dancers, prize-fighters, race-horses, and the dog Billy. Samuel Dolly was in full dress. His cheeks, usually so pale, seemed much flushed. He was evidently in a state of high excitement, bowed extremely low to Mrs. Crane, called her Countess, asked if she had been lately on the Continent, and if she knew Madame Caumartin; and whether the nobility at St. Petersburg were jolly, or stuck-up fellows, who gave themselves airs —not waiting for her answer. In fact his mind was unquestionably disordered.

Arabella Crane abruptly laid her hand on his shoulder. "You are going to the gallows," she said, suddenly. "Down on your knees and tell me all, and I will keep your secret, and save you; lie—and you are lost!"

Poole burst into tears, and dropped on his knees as he was told.

In ten minutes Mrs. Crane knew all that she cared to know, possessed herself of Losely's letters, and, leaving Poole less light-headed and more light-hearted, she hastened to Uncle Sam at the Gloucester Coffee-house. "Take your nephew out of town this evening, and do not let him from your sight for the next six months. Hark you, he will never be a good man; but you may save him from the hulks. Do so. Take my advice." She was gone before Uncle Sam could answer.

She next proceeded to the private house of the detective with whom she had before conferred—this time less to give than to receive information. Not half an hour after her interview with him, Arabella Crane stood in the

street wherein was placed the showy house of Madame Caumartin. The lamps in the street were now lighted—the street, even at day, a quiet one, was comparatively deserted. All the windows in the French woman's house were closed with shutters and curtains, except on the drawing-room floor. From those the lights within streamed over a balcony filled with gay plants—one of the casements was partially open. And now and then, where the watcher stood, she could just catch the glimpse of a passing form behind the muslin draperies, or hear the sound of some louder laugh. In her dark-gray dress, and still darker mantle, Arabella Crane stood motionless, her eyes fixed on those windows. The rare foot-passenger who brushed by her turned involuntarily to glance at the countenance of one so still, and then as involuntarily to survey the house to which that countenance was lifted. No such observer so incurious as not to hazard conjecture what evil to that house was boded by the dark lurid eyes that watched it with so fixed a menace. Thus she remained, sometimes, indeed, moving from her post, as a sentry moves from his, slowly pacing a few steps to and fro, returning to the same place, and again motionless; thus she remained for hours. Evening deepened into night—night grew near to dawn; she was still there in that street, and still her eyes were on that house. At length the door opened noiselessly—a tall man tripped forth with a light step, and humming the tune of a gay French *chanson*. As he came straight toward the spot where Arabella Crane was at watch, from her dark mantle stretched forth her long arm and lean hand, and seized him. He started, and recognized her.

"You here!" he exclaimed—"you!—at such an hour!—you!"

"I, Jasper Losely, here to warn you. To-morrow the officers of justice will be in that accursed house. To-morrow that woman—not for her worst crimes, they elude the law, but for her least, by which the law hunts her down—will be a prisoner. No—you shall not return to warn her as I warn you" (for Jasper here broke away, and retreated some steps toward the house); "or, if you do, share her fate. I cast you off."

"What do you mean?" said Jasper, halting, till with slow steps she regained his side. "Speak more plainly: if poor Madame Caumartin has got into a scrape, which I don't think likely, what have I to do with it?"

"The woman you call Caumartin fled from Paris to escape its tribunals. She has been tracked; the French Government have claimed her. Ho! you smile. This does not touch you."

"Certainly not."

"But there are charges against her from English tradesmen, and if it be proved that you knew her in her proper name—the infamous Gabrielle Desmarets—if it be proved that you have passed off the French *billets de banque* that she stole—if you were her accomplice in obtaining goods under her false name—if you, enriched by her robberies, were aiding and abetting her as a swindler here, though you may be safe from the French law, will you be safe from the English? You may be innocent, Jasper Losely; if so, fear nothing. You may be guilty; if so, hide, or follow me!"

Jasper paused. His first impulse was to trust implicitly to Mrs. Crane, and lose not a moment in profiting by such counsels of concealment or flight as an intelligence so superior to his own could suggest. But suddenly remembering that Poole had undertaken to get the bill for £1000 by the next day—that if flight were necessary, there was yet a chance of flight with booty—his constitutional hardihood, and the grasping cupidity by which it was accompanied, made him resolve at least to hazard the delay of a few hours. And after all, might not Mrs. Crane exaggerate? Was not this the counsel of a jealous woman? "Pray," said he, moving on, and fixing quick keen eyes on her as she walked by his side, "pray, how did you learn all these particulars?"

"From a detective policeman employed to discover Sophy. In conferring with him, the name of Jasper Losely as her legal protector was of course stated: that name was already coupled with the name of the false Caumartin. Thus, indirectly, the child you would have consigned to that woman, saves you from sharing that woman's ignominy and doom."

"Stuff!" said Jasper, stubbornly, though he winced at her words; "I don't, on reflection, see that any thing can be proved against me. I am not bound to know why a lady changes her name, nor how she comes by her money. And as to her credit with tradesmen—nothing to speak of; most of what she has got is paid for—what is not paid for, is less than the worth of her goods. Pooh! I am not so easily frightened—much obliged to you all the same. Go home now; 'tis horridly late. Good-night, or rather good-morning."

"Jasper, mark me! if you see that woman again—if you attempt to save or screen her—I shall know, and you lose in me your last friend—last hope—last plank in a devouring sea!"

These words were so solemnly uttered that they thrilled the hard heart of the reckless man. "I have no wish to screen or save her," he said, with selfish sincerity. "And after what you have said, I would as soon enter a fire-ship as that house. But let me have some hours to consider what is best to be done."

"Yes, consider—I shall expect you to-morrow."

He went his way up the twilight streets toward a new lodging he had hired not far from the showy house. She drew her mantle closer round her gaunt figure, and, taking the opposite direction, threaded thoroughfares yet lonelier, till she gained her door, and was welcomed back by the faithful Bridgett.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hope tells a flattering tale to Mr. Rugge. He is undeceived by a Solicitor, and left to mourn; but in turn, though unconsciously, Mr. Rugge deceives the Solicitor, and the Solicitor deceives his client, which is 6s. 8d. in the Solicitor's pocket.

THE next morning Arabella Crane was scarcely dressed before Mr. Rugge knocked at her door. On the previous day the Detective had informed him that William and Sophy Waife were discovered to have sailed for America. Frantic, the unhappy manager rushed to the steam-pack-

et office, and was favored by an inspection of the books, which confirmed the hateful tidings. As if in mockery of his bereaved and defrauded state, on returning home he found a polite note from Mr. Gotobed, requesting him to call at the office of that eminent solicitor, with reference to a young actress named Sophy Waife, and hinting "that the visit might prove to his advantage!" Dreaming for a wild moment that Mr. Losely, conscience-stricken, might through this solicitor pay back his £100, he rushed incontinent to Mr. Gotobed's office, and was at once admitted into the presence of that stately practitioner.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said Mr. Gotobed, with formal politeness, "but I heard a day or two ago accidentally from my head-clerk, who had learned it also accidentally from a sporting friend, that you were exhibiting at Humberston, during the race-week, a young actress named on the play-bills (here is one) 'Juliet Araminta,' and whom, as I am informed, you had previously exhibited in Surrey and elsewhere; but she was supposed to have relinquished that earlier engagement, and left your stage with her grandfather, William Waife. I am instructed by a distinguished client, who is wealthy, and who, from motives of mere benevolence, interests himself in the said William and Sophy Waife, to discover their residence. Please, therefore, to render up the child to my charge, apprising me also of the address of her grandfather, if he be not with you; and without waiting for further instructions from my client, who is abroad, I will venture to say that any sacrifice in the loss of your juvenile actress will be most liberally compensated."

"Sir," cried the miserable and imprudent Rugge, "I paid £100 for that fiendish child—a three years' engagement—and I have been robbed. Restore me the £100, and I will tell you where she is, and her vile grandfather also."

At hearing so bad a character lavished upon objects recommended to his client's disinterested charity, the wary solicitor drew in his pecuniary horns.

"Mr. Rugge," said he, "I understand from your words that you can not place the child Sophy, *alias* Juliet Araminta, in my hands. You ask £100 to inform me where she is. Have you a lawful claim on her?"

"Certainly, Sir; she is my property."

"Then it is quite clear that though you may know where she is, you can not get at her yourself, and can not, therefore, place her in my hands. Perhaps she is—in heaven!"

"Confound her, Sir! no—in America! or on the seas to it."

"Are you sure?"

"I have just come from the steam-packet office, and seen the names in their book. William and Sophy Waife sailed from Liverpool last Thursday week."

"And they formed an engagement with you—received your money; broke the one, absconded with the other. Bad characters indeed!"

"Bad! you may well say that—a set of swindling scoundrels, the whole kit and kin. And the ingratitude!" continued Rugge: "I was more than a father to that child" (he began to whimper): "I had a babe of my own once—died of convulsions in teething. I thought that child would have supplied its place, and I dreamed of the York Theatre; but"—here his voice was lost in the folds of a marvelously dirty red pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Gotobed having now, however, learned all that he cared to learn, and not being a soft-hearted man (first-rate solicitors rarely are), here pulled out his watch and said,

"Sir, you have been very ill-treated, I perceive. I must wish you good-day; I have an engagement in the City. I can not help you back to your £100, but accept this trifle (a £5 note) for your loss of time in calling" (ringing the bell violently). "Door—show out this gentleman."

That evening Mr. Gotobed wrote at length to Guy Darrell, informing him that, after great pains and prolonged research, he had been so fortunate as to ascertain that the strolling player and little girl whom Mr. Darrell had so benevolently requested him to look up, were very bad characters, and had left the country for the United States, as, happily for England, bad characters were wont to do.

That letter reached Guy Darrell when he was far away, amidst the forlorn pomp of some old Italian city, and Lionel's tale of the little girl not very fresh in his gloomy thoughts. Naturally, he supposed that the boy had been duped by a pretty face and his own inexperienced kindly heart. And so and so—why, so end half the efforts of men who intrust to others the troublesome execution of humane intentions! The scales of earthly justice are poised in their quivering equilibrium, not by huge hundred-weights, but by infinitesimal grains, needing the most wary caution—the most considerate patience—the most delicate touch, to arrange or readjust. Few of our errors, national or individual, come from the design to be unjust—most of them from sloth, or incapacity to grapple with the difficulties of being just. Sins of commission may not, perhaps, shock the retrospect of conscience. Large and obtrusive to view, we have confessed, mourned, repented, possibly atoned them. Sins of omission, so vailed amidst our hourly emotions—blent, confused, unseen, in the conventional routine of existence—Alas! could *these* suddenly emerge from their shadow, group together in serried mass and accusing order—alas, alas! would not the best of us then start in dismay, and would not the proudest humble himself at the Throne of Mercy!

CHAPTER XIX.

Joy, nevertheless, does return to Mr. Rugge; and Hope now inflicts herself on Mrs. Crane. A very fine-looking Hope, too—six feet one—strong as Achilles, and as fleet of foot!

But we have left Mr. Rugge at Mrs. Crane's door; admit him. He bursts into her drawing-room, wiping his brows.

"Ma'am, they are off to America—!"

"So I have heard. You are fairly entitled to the return of your money—"

"Entitled, of course; but—"

"There it is; restore to me the contract for the child's services."

Rugge gazed on a roll of bank-notes, and could

scarcely believe his eyes. He darted forth his hand, the notes receded like the dagger in Macbeth, "First the contract," said Mrs. Crane. Rugge drew out his greasy pocket-book, and extracted the worthless engagement.

"Henceforth, then," said Mrs. Crane, "you have no right to complain; and whether or not the girl ever again fall in your way, your claim over her ceases."

"The gods be praised, it does, ma'am; I have had quite enough of her. But you are every inch a lady, and allow me to add that I put you on my free list for life."

Rugge gone; Arabella Crane summoned Bridgett to her presence.

"Lor, miss," cried Bridgett, impulsively, "who'd think you'd been up all night raking! I have not seen you look so well this many a year."

"Ah," said Arabella Crane, "I will tell you why. I have done what for many a year I never thought I should do again—a good action. That child—that Sophy—you remember how cruelly I used her?"

"Oh, miss, don't go for to blame yourself; you fed her, you clothed her, when her own father, the villing, sent her away from hisself to you—you of all people—*you*. How could *you* be caressing and fawning on his child—their child?"

Mrs. Crane hung her head gloomily. "What is past is past. I have lived to save that child, and a curse seems lifted from my soul. Now listen: I shall leave London—England, probably this evening. You will keep this house; it will be ready for me any moment I return. The agent who collects my house-rents will give you money as you want it. Stint not yourself, Bridgett. I have been saving, and saving, and saving, for dreary years—nothing else to interest me—and I am richer than I seem."

"But where are you going, miss?" said Bridgett, slowly recovering from the stupefaction occasioned by her mistress's announcement.

"I don't know—I don't care."

"Oh, gracious stars! is it with that dreadful Jasper Losely?—it is, it is. You are crazed, you are bewitched, miss!"

"Possibly I am crazed—possibly bewitched; but I take that man's life to mine as a penance for all the evil mine has ever known; and a day or two since I should have said, with rage and shame, 'I can not help it; I loathe myself that I can care what becomes of him.' Now, without rage, without shame, I say, 'The man whom I once so loved shall not die on a gibbet if I can help it; and, please Heaven, help it I will.'"

The grim woman folded her arms on her breast, and raising her head to its full height, there was in her face and air a stern gloomy grandeur, which could not have been seen without a mixed sensation of compassion and awe.

"Go, now, Bridgett; I have said all. He will be here soon; he will come—he must come—he has no choice; and then—and then—" she closed her eyes, bowed her head, and shivered.

Arabella Crane was, as usual, right in her predictions. Before noon Jasper came—came, not with his jocund swagger, but with that sideling sinister look—look of the man whom the world cuts—triumphantly restored to its former place in his visage. Madame Caumartin had been arrested; Poole had gone into the country with Uncle Sam; Jasper had seen a police-officer at the door of his own lodgings. He slunk away from the fashionable thoroughfares—slunk to the recesses of Podden Place—slunk into Arabella Crane's prim drawing-room, and said, sullenly, "All is up; here I am!"

Three days afterward, in a quiet street in a quiet town of Belgium, wherein a sharper, striving to live by his profession, would soon become a skeleton, in a commodious airy apartment, looking upon a magnificent street, the reverse of noisy, Jasper Losely sat secure, innocuous, and profoundly miserable. In another house, the windows of which, facing those of Jasper's sitting-room, from an upper story, commanded so good a view therein that it placed him under a surveillance akin to that designed by Mr. Bentham's reformatory Panopticon, sat Arabella Crane. Whatever her real feelings toward Jasper Losely (and what those feelings were no virile pen can presume authoritatively to define—for lived there ever a man who thoroughly—thoroughly understood a woman?), or whatever in earlier life might have been their reciprocated vows of eternal love, not only from the day that Jasper, on his return to his native shores, presented himself in Podden Place, had their intimacy been restricted to the austerest bounds of friendship; but after Jasper had so rudely declined the hand which now fed him, Arabella Crane had probably perceived that her sole chance of retaining intellectual power over his lawless being, necessitated the utter relinquishment of every hope or project that could expose her again to his contempt. Suiting appearances to reality, the decorum of a separate house was essential to the maintenance of that authority with which the rigid nature of their intercourse invested her. The additional cost strained her pecuniary resources, but she saved in her own accommodation in order to leave Jasper no cause to complain of any stinting in his. There, then, she sate by her window, herself unseen, eying him in his opposite solitude, accepting for her own life a barren sacrifice, but a jealous sentinel on his. Meditating as she sate, and as she eyed him—meditating what employment she could invent, with the bribe of emoluments to be paid furtively by her—for those strong hands that could have felled an ox, but were nerveless in turning an honest penny—and for that restless mind, hungering for occupation, with the digestion of an ostrich for dice and debauch, riot and fraud, but queasy as an exhausted dyspeptic at the reception of one innocent amusement, one honorable toil. But while that woman still schemes how to rescue from hulks or halter that execrable man, who shall say that he is without a chance? A chance he has—WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

Envy will be a science when it learns the use of the microscope.

When leaves fall and flowers fade, great people are found in their country seats. Look!—that is Montfort Court! A place of regal magnificence, so far as extent of pile and amplitude of domain could satisfy the pride of ownership, or inspire the visitor with the respect due to wealth and power. An artist could have made nothing of it. The Sumptuous every where—the Picturesque nowhere. The House was built in the reign of George I., when first commenced that horror of the Beautiful, as something in bad taste, which, agreeably to our natural love of progress, progressively advanced through the reigns of succeeding Georges. An enormous *façade*—in dull brown brick—two wings and a centre, with double flights of steps to the hall door from the carriage-sweep. No trees allowed to grow too near the house; in front, a stately flat with stone balustrades. But wherever the eye turned there was nothing to be seen but park—miles upon miles of park; not a corn-field in sight—not a roof-tree—not a spire—only those *lata silentia*—still widths of turf, and, somewhat thinly scattered and afar, those groves of giant trees. The whole prospect so vast and so monotonous that it never tempted you to take a walk. No close-neighboring poetic thicket into which to plunge, uncertain whither you would emerge; no devious stream to follow. The very deer, fat and heavy, seemed bored by pastures it would take them a week to traverse. People of moderate wishes and modest fortunes never envied Montfort Court; they admired it—they were proud to say they had seen it. But never did they say,

"Oh, that for me some home like this would smile!"

Not so, very—*very* great people!—*they* rather coveted than admired. Those oak-trees so large, yet so undecayed—that park, eighteen miles at least in circumference—that solid palace which, without inconvenience, could entertain and stow away a king and his whole court—in short, all that evidence of a princely territory, and a weighty rent-roll, made English dukes respectfully envious, and foreign potentates gratifyingly jealous.

But turn from the front. Open the gate in that stone balustrade. Come southward to the garden side of the house. Lady Montfort's flower-garden. Yes; not so dull! flowers, even autumnal flowers, enliven any sward. Still, on so large a scale, and so little relief; so little mystery about those broad gravel walks; not a winding alley any where. Oh for a vulgar summer-house; for some alcove, all honey-suckle and ivy! But the dahlias are splendid! Very true; only dahlias, at the best, are such uninteresting prosy things. What poet ever wrote upon a dahlia! Surely Lady Montfort might have introduced a little more taste here—shown a little more fancy! Lady Montfort! I should like to see my lord's face, if Lady Montfort took any such liberty. But there is Lady Montfort walking slowly along that broad, broad, broad gravel walk—those splendid dahlias, on either side, in their set parterres. There she walks, in full evidence from all those sixty remorseless windows on the garden front, each window exactly like the other. There she walks, looking wistfully to the far end—('tis a long way off)—where, happily, there is a wicket that carries a persevering pedestrian out of sight of the sixty windows, into shady walks, toward the banks of that immense piece of water, two miles from the house. My lord has not returned from his moor in Scotland—My lady is alone. No company in the house—it is like saying, "No acquaintance in a city." But the retinue in full. Though she dined alone, she might, had she pleased, have had almost as many servants to gaze upon her as there were windows now staring at her lonely walk, with their glassy spectral eyes.

Just as Lady Montfort gains the wicket she is overtaken by a visitor, walking fast from the gravel sweep by the front door, where he has dismounted—where he has caught sight of her; any one so dismounting might have caught sight of her—could not help it. Gardens so fine, were made on purpose for fine persons walking in them to be seen.

"Ah, Lady Montfort," said the visitor, stammering painfully, "I am so glad to find you at home."

"At home, George!" said the lady, extending her hand; "where else is it likely that I should be found? But how pale you are! What has happened?"

She seated herself on a bench, under a cedar-tree, just without the wicket, and George Morley, our old friend the Oxonian, seated himself by her side familiarly, but with a certain reverence. Lady Montfort was a few years older than himself—his cousin—he had known her from his childhood.

"What has happened!" he repeated, "nothing new. I have just come from visiting the good bishop."

"He does not hesitate to ordain you?"

"No—but I shall never ask him to do so."

"My dear cousin, are you not overscrupulous? You would be an ornament to the Church, sufficient in all else to justify your compulsory omission of one duty, which a curate could perform for you."

Morley shook his head sadly. "One duty omitted!" said he. "But is it not that duty which distinguishes the priest from the layman? and how far extends that duty? Wherever there needs a voice to speak the Word; not in the pulpit only, but at the hearth, by the sick bed; *there* should be the Pastor! No—I can not, I ought not, I dare not! Incompetent as the laborer, how can I be worthy of the hire?" It took him long to bring out these words; his

emotion increased his infirmity. Lady Montfort listened with an exquisite respect, visible in her compassion, and paused long before she answered.

George Morley was the younger son of a country gentleman, with a good estate settled upon the elder son. George's father had been an intimate friend of his kinsman, the Marquis of Montfort (predecessor and grandsire of the present lord); and the Marquis had, as he thought, amply provided for George in undertaking to secure to him, when of fitting age, the living of Humberston, the most lucrative preferment in his gift. The living had been held for the last fifteen years by an incumbent, now very old, upon the honorable understanding that it was to be resigned in favor of George should George take orders. The young man from his earliest childhood thus destined to the Church, devoted to the prospect of that profession all his studies, all his thoughts. Not till he was sixteen did his infirmity of speech make itself seriously perceptible; and then elocution masters undertook to cure it—they failed. But George's mind continued in the direction toward which it had been so systematically biased. Entering Oxford, he became absorbed in its academical shades. Amidst his books he almost forgot the impediment of his speech. Shy, taciturn, and solitary, he mixed too little with others to have it much brought before his own notice. He carried off prizes—he took high honors. On leaving the university, a profound theologian—an enthusiastic Churchman—filled with the most earnest sense of the pastor's solemn calling—he was thus complimentarily accosted by the Archimandrite of his college, "What a pity you can not go into the Church!"

"Can not—but I *am* going into the Church."

"You, is it possible? But perhaps you are sure of a living—"

"Yes—Humberston."

"An immense living, but a very large population. Certainly it is in the bishop's own discretionary power to ordain you, and for all the duties you can keep a curate. But—" The Don stopped short, and took snuff.

That "But" said as plainly as words could say, "It may be a good thing for you, but is it fair for the Church?"

So George Morley, at least, thought that "But" implied. His conscience took alarm. He was a thoroughly noble-hearted man, likely to be the more tender of conscience where tempted by worldly interests. With that living he was rich, without it very poor. But to give up a calling, to the idea of which he had attached himself with all the force of a powerful and zealous nature, was to give up the whole scheme and dream of his existence. He remained irresolute for some time; at last he wrote to the present Lord Montfort, intimating his doubts, and relieving the Marquis from the engagement which his lordship's predecessor had made. The present Marquis was not a man capable of understanding such scruples. But, luckily perhaps for George and for the Church, the larger affairs of the great House of Montfort were not administered by the Marquis. The parliamentary influences, the ecclesiastical preferments, together with the practical direction of minor agents to the vast and complicated estates attached to the title, were at that time under the direction of Mr. Carr Vipont, a powerful member of Parliament, and husband to that Lady Selina whose condescension had so disturbed the nerves of Frank Vance the artist. Mr. Carr Vipont governed this vice-royalty according to the rules and traditions by which the House of Montfort had become great and prosperous. For not only every state, but every great seigniorial House has its hereditary maxims of policy: not less the House of Montfort than the House of Hapsburg. Now the House of Montfort made it a rule that all admitted to be members of the family should help each other; that the head of the House should never, if it could be avoided, suffer any of its branches to decay and wither into poverty. The House of Montfort also held it a duty to foster and make the most of every species of talent that could swell the influence, or adorn the annals of the family. Having rank, having wealth, it sought also to secure intellect, and to knit together into solid union, throughout all ramifications of kinship and cousinhood, each variety of repute and power that could root the ancient tree more firmly in the land. Agreeably to this traditional policy, Mr. Carr Vipont not only desired that a Vipont Morley should not lose a very good thing, but that a very good thing should not lose a Vipont Morley of high academical distinction—a Vipont Morley who might be a bishop! He therefore drew up an admirable letter, which the Marquis signed—that the Marquis should take the trouble of copying it was out of the question—wherein Lord Montfort was made to express great admiration of the disinterested delicacy of sentiment, which proved George Vipont Morley to be still more fitted to the cure of souls; and, placing rooms at Montfort Court at his service (the Marquis not being himself there at the moment), suggested that George should talk the matter over with the present incumbent of Humberston (that town was not many miles distant from Montfort Court), who, though he had no impediment in his speech, still never himself preached or read prayers, owing to an affection of the trachea, and who was, nevertheless, a most efficient clergyman. George Morley, therefore, had gone down to Montfort Court some months ago, just after his interview with Mrs. Crane. He had then accepted an invitation to spend a week or two with the Rev. Mr. Allsop, the Rector of Humberston—a clergyman of the old school, a fair scholar, a perfect gentleman, a man of the highest honor, good-natured, charitable, but who took pastoral duties much more easily than good clergymen of the new school—be they high or low—are disposed to do. Mr. Allsop, who was then in his eightieth year, a bachelor with a very good fortune of his own, was perfectly willing to fulfill the engagement on which he held his living, and render it up to George; but he was touched by the earnestness with which George assured him that at all events he would not consent to displace the venerable incumbent from a tenure he had so long and honorably held—and would wait till the living was vacated in the ordinary course of nature. Mr. Allsop conceived a warm affection for the young scholar. He had a grandniece staying with him on a vis-

it, who less openly, but not less warmly, shared that affection; and with her George Morley fell shyly and timorously in love. With that living he would be rich enough to marry—without it, no. Without it he had nothing but a fellowship, which matrimony would forfeit, and the scanty portion of a country squire's younger son. The young lady herself was dowerless, for Allsop's fortune was so settled that no share of it would come to his grandniece. Another reason for conscience to gulp down that unhappy impediment of speech! Certainly, during this visit, Morley's scruples relaxed; but when he returned home they came back with greater force than ever—with greater force, because he felt that now not only a spiritual ambition, but a human love was a casuist in favor of self-interest. He had returned on a visit to Humberston Rectory about a week previous to the date of this chapter—the niece was not there. Sternly he had forced himself to examine a little more closely into the condition of the flock which (if he accepted the charge) he would have to guide, and the duties that devolved upon the chief pastor in a populous trading town. He became appalled. Humberston, like most towns under the political influence of a Great House, was rent by parties. One party, who succeeded in returning one of the two members for Parliament, all for the House of Montfort; the other party, who returned also their member, all against it. By one half the town, whatever came from Montfort Court was sure to be regarded with a most malignant and distorted vision. Meanwhile, though Mr. Allsop was popular with the higher classes, and with such of the extreme poor as his charity relieved, his pastoral influence generally was a dead letter. His curate, who preached for him — a good young man enough, but extremely dull—was not one of those men who fill a church. Tradesmen wanted an excuse to stay away or choose another place of worship; and they contrived to hear some passage in the sermons, over which, while the curate mumbled, they habitually slept —that they declared to be "Puseyite." The church became deserted: and about the same time a very eloquent Dissenting minister appeared at Humberston, and even professed churchfolks went to hear him. George Morley, alas! perceived that at Humberston, if the Church there were to hold her own, a powerful and popular preacher was essentially required. His mind was now made up. At Carr Vipont's suggestion, the bishop of the diocese, being then at his palace, had sent to see him; and, while granting the force of his scruples, had yet said, "Mine is the main responsibility. But if you ask me to ordain you, I will do so without hesitation; for if the Church wants preachers, it also wants deep scholars and virtuous pastors." Fresh from this interview, George Morley came to announce to Lady Montfort that his resolve was unshaken. She, I have said, paused long before she answered. "George," she began at last, in a voice so touchingly sweet that its very sound was balm to a wounded spirit—"I must not argue with you—I bow before the grandeur of your motives, and I will not say that you are not right. One thing I do feel, that if you thus sacrifice your inclinations and interests from scruples so pure and holy, you will never be to be pitied—you will never know regret. Poor or rich, single or wedded, a soul that so seeks to reflect heaven will be serene and blessed!" Thus she continued to address him for some time, he all the while inexpressibly soothed and comforted; then gradually she insinuated hopes even of a worldly and temporal kind—literature was left to him—the scholar's pen, if not the preacher's voice. In literature he might make a career that would lead on to fortune. There were places also in the public service to which a defect in speech was no obstacle. She knew his secret, modest attachment; she alluded to it just enough to encourage constancy and rebuke despair. As she ceased, his admiring and grateful consciousness of his cousin's rare qualities changed the tide of his emotions toward her from himself, and he exclaimed with an earnestness that almost wholly subdued his stutter,

"What a counselor you are!—what a soother! If Montfort were but less prosperous or more ambitious, what a treasure, either to console or to sustain, in a mind like yours!"

As those words were said, you might have seen at once why Lady Montfort was called haughty and reserved. Her lip seemed suddenly to snatch back its sweet smile—her dark eye, before so purely, softly friend-like, became coldly distant—the tones of her voice were not the same as she answered—

"Lord Montfort values me, as it is, far beyond my merits—far," she added, with a different intonation, gravely mournful.

"Forgive me; I have displeased you. I did not mean it. Heaven forbid that I should presume either to disparage Lord Montfort—or—or to—" he stopped short, saving the hiatus by a convenient stammer. "Only," he continued, after a pause, "only forgive me this once. Recollect I was a little boy when you were a young lady, and I have pelted you with snow-balls, and called you 'Caroline.'" Lady Montfort suppressed a sigh, and gave the young scholar back her gracious smile, but not a smile that would have permitted him to call her "Caroline" again. She remained, indeed, a little more distant than usual during the rest of their interview, which was not much prolonged; for Morley felt annoyed with himself that he had so indiscreetly offended her, and seized an excuse to escape. "By-the-by," said he, "I have a letter from Mr. Carr Vipont, asking me to give him a sketch for a Gothic bridge to the water yonder. I will, with your leave, walk down and look at the proposed site. Only do say that you forgive me."

"Forgive you, Cousin George, oh yes. One word only—it is true you were a child still when I fancied I was a woman, and you have a right to talk to me upon all things, except those that relate to me and Lord Montfort; unless, indeed," she added, with a bewitching half laugh, "unless you ever see cause to scold me, there. Good-by, my cousin, and in turn forgive me, if I was so petulant. The Caroline you pelted with snow-balls was always a wayward, impulsive creature, quick to take offense, to misunderstand, and—to repent."

Back into the broad, broad gravel-walk, walked, more slowly than before, Lady Montfort. Again the sixty ghastly windows stared

at her with all their eyes—back from the gravel-walk, through a side-door, into the pompous solitude of the stately house—across long chambers, where the mirrors reflected her form, and the huge chairs, in their flaunting damask and flaring gold, stood stiff on desolate floors—into her own private room—neither large nor splendid that; plain chintzes, quiet book-shelves. She need not have been the Marchioness of Montfort to inhabit a room as pleasant and as luxurious. And the rooms that she could only have owned as Marchioness, what were those worth to her happiness? I know not. "Nothing," fine ladies will perhaps answer. Yet those same fine ladies will contrive to dispose their daughters to answer, "All." In her own room Lady Montfort sunk on her chair; wearily;—wearily she looked at the clock—wearily at the books on the shelves—at the harp near the window. Then she leaned her face on her hand, and that face was so sad, and so humbly sad, that you would have wondered how any one could call Lady Montfort proud.

"Treasure! I—I!—worthless, fickle, credulous fool!—I—I!"

The groom of the chambers entered with the letters by the afternoon post. That Great House contrived to worry itself with two posts a day. A royal command to Windsor—

"I shall be more alone in a court than here," murmured Lady Montfort.

CHAPTER II.

Truly saith the proverb, "Much corn lies under the straw that is not seen."

Meanwhile George Morley followed the long shady walk—very handsome walk, full of prize roses and rare exotics—artificially winding, too—walk so well kept that it took thirty-four men to keep it—noble walk, tiresome walk—till it brought him to the great piece of water, which, perhaps, four times in the year was visited by the great folks in the Great House. And being thus out of the immediate patronage of fashion, the great piece of water really looked natural — companionable, refreshing — you began to breathe — to unbutton your waistcoat, loosen your neckcloth—quote Chaucer, if you could recollect him, or Cowper, or Shakspeare, or Thomson's Seasons; in short, any scraps of verse that came into your head—as your feet grew joyously entangled with fern—as the trees grouped forest-like before and round you—trees which there being out of sight, were allowed to grow too old to be worth five shillings apiece, moss-grown, hollow-trunked, some pollarded—trees invaluable! Ha! the hare! how she scuds! See, the deer marching down to the water-side. What groves of bulrushes—islands of water-lily! And to throw a Gothic bridge there, bring a great gravel road over the bridge! Oh, shame! shame!

So would have said the scholar, for he had a true sentiment for nature, if the bridge had not clean gone out of his head.

Wandering alone, he came at last to the most umbrageous and sequestered bank of the wide water, closed round on every side by brushwood, or still patriarchal trees.

Suddenly he arrested his steps—an idea struck him—one of those odd, whimsical, grotesque ideas which often when we are alone come across us, even in our quietest or most anxious moods. Was his infirmity really incurable? Elocution masters had said "Certainly not;" but they had done him no good. Yet had not the greatest orator the world ever knew a defect in utterance? He too, Demosthenes, had, no doubt, paid fees to elocution masters, the best in Athens, where elocution masters must have studied their art *ad unguem*, and the defect had baffled them. But did Demosthenes despair? No, he resolved to cure himself—How? Was it not one of his methods to fill his mouth with pebbles, and practice manfully to the roaring sea? George Morley had never tried the effect of pebbles. Was there any virtue in them? Why not try? No sea there, it is true; but a sea was only useful as representing the noise of a stormy democratic audience. To represent a peaceful congregation that still sheet of water would do as well. Pebbles there were in plenty just by that gravelly cove, near which a young pike lay sunning his green back. Half in jest, half in earnest, the scholar picked up a handful of pebbles, wiped them from sand and mould, inserted them between his teeth cautiously, and, looking round to assure himself that none were by, began an extempore discourse. So interested did he become in that classical experiment, that he might have tortured the air and astonished the magpies (three of whom from a neighboring thicket listened perfectly spell-bound) for more than half an hour, when, seized with shame at the ludicrous impotence of his exertions—with despair that so wretched a barrier should stand between his mind and its expression—he flung away the pebbles, and, sinking on the ground, he fairly wept—wept like a baffled child.

The fact was, that Morley had really the temperament of an orator; he had the orator's gifts in warmth of passion, rush of thought, logical arrangement; there was in him the genius of a great preacher. He felt it—he knew it; and in that despair which only Genius knows, when some pitiful cause obstructs its energies and strikes down its powers—making a confidant of Solitude—he wept loud and freely.

"Do not despond, Sir; I undertake to cure you," said a voice behind.

George started up in confusion. A man, elderly, but fresh and vigorous, stood beside him, in a light fustian jacket, a blue apron, and with rushes in his hands, which he continued to plait together nimbly and deftly as he bowed to the startled scholar.

"I was in the shade of the thicket yonder, Sir; pardon me, I could not help hearing you."

The Oxonian rubbed his eyes, and stared at the man with a vague impression that he had seen him before—When? Where?

"You can cure me," he stuttered out; "what of?—the folly of trying to speak in public. Thank you, I am cured."

"Nay, Sir, you see before you a man who can make you a very good speaker. Your voice is naturally fine. I repeat I can cure a defect which is not in the organ, but in the management."

"You can! you—who and what are you?"

"A basket-maker, Sir; I hope for your custom."

"Surely this is not the first time I have seen you?"

"True; you once kindly suffered me to borrow a resting-place on your father's land. One good turn deserves another."

At that moment Sir Isaac peered through the brambles, and, restored to his original whiteness, and relieved from his false, horned ears, marched gravely toward the water, sniffed at the scholar, slightly wagged his tail, and buried himself among the reeds in search of a water-rat he had therein disturbed a week before, and always expected to find again.

The sight of the dog immediately cleared up the cloud in the scholar's memory; but with recognition came back a keen curiosity and a sharp pang of remorse.

"And your little girl?" he asked, looking down abashed.

"Better than she was when we last met. Providence is so kind to us."

Poor Waife, he never guessed that to the person he thus revealed himself he owed the grief for Sophy's abduction. He divined no reason for the scholar's flushing cheek and embarrassed manner.

"Yes, Sir, we have just settled in this neighborhood. I have a pretty cottage yonder at the outskirts of the village, and near the park-pales. I recognized you at once; and as I heard you just now, I called to mind that when we met before, you said your calling should be the Church, were it not for your difficulty in utterance; and I said to myself, 'No bad things those pebbles, if his utterance were thick, which it is not;' and I have not a doubt, Sir, that the true fault of Demosthenes, whom I presume you were imitating, was that he spoke through his nose."

"Eh!" said the scholar, "through his nose? I never knew that!—and I—"

"And you are trying to speak without lungs; that is, without air in them. You don't smoke, I presume?"

"No—certainly not."

"You must learn—speak between each slow puff of your pipe. All you want is time, time to quiet the nerves, time to think, time to breathe. The moment you begin to stammer—stop—fill the lungs thus, then try again! It is only a clever man who can learn to write—that is, to compose; but any fool can be taught to speak—Courage!"

"If you really can teach me," cried the learned man, forgetting all self-reproach for his betrayal of Waife to Mrs. Crane in the absorbing interest of the hope that sprang up within him—"If you can teach me—if I can but con—con—con—conq—"

"Slowly—slowly—breath and time; take a whiff from my pipe—that's right. Yes, you can conquer the impediment."

"Then I will be the best friend to you that man ever had. There's my hand on it."

"I take it, but I ask leave to change the parties in the contract. I don't want a friend—I don't deserve one. You'll be a friend to my little girl instead; and if ever I ask you to help me in aught for her welfare and happiness—"

"I will help, heart and soul. Slight, indeed, any service to her or to you compared with such service to me. Free this wretched tongue from its stammer, and thought and zeal will not stammer whenever you say, 'Keep your promise.' I am so glad your little girl is still with you!"

Waife looked surprised—"Is still with me—why not?"

The scholar bit his tongue. That was not the moment to confess; it might destroy all Waife's confidence in him. He would do so later.

"When shall I begin my lesson?"

"Now, if you like. But have you a book in your pocket?"

"I always have."

"Not Greek, I hope, Sir."

"No, a volume of Barrow's Sermons. Lord Chatham recommended those sermons to his great son as a study for eloquence."

"Good! Will you lend me the volume, Sir, and now for it; listen to me: one sentence at a time—draw your breath when I do."

The three magpies pricked up their ears again, and, as they listened, marveled much.

CHAPTER III.

Could we know by what strange circumstances a man's genius became prepared for practical success, we should discover that the most serviceable items in his education were never entered in the bills which his father paid for it.

At the end of the very first lesson George Morley saw that all the elocution-masters to whose skill he had been consigned were blunderers in comparison to the basket-maker.

Waife did not puzzle him with scientific theories. All that the great comedian required of him was to observe and to imitate. Observation, imitation, lo! the ground-work of all art! the primal elements of all genius! Not there, indeed, to halt, but there ever to commence. What remains to carry on the intellect to mastery? Two steps—to reflect, to reproduce. Observation, imitation, reflection, reproduction. In these stands a mind complete and consummate, fit to cope with all labor, achieve all success.

At the end of the first lesson George Morley felt that his cure was possible. Making an appointment for the next day at the same place, he came thither stealthily, and so on day by day. At the end of a week he felt that the cure was nearly sure; at the end of a month the cure was self-evident. He should live to preach the Word. True, that he practiced incessantly in private. Not a moment in his waking hours that the one thought, one object, were absent from his mind; true, that with all his patience, all his toil, the obstacle was yet serious, might never be entirely overcome. Nervous hurry—rapidity of action—vehemence of feeling brought back, might, at unguarded moments, always bring back the gasping breath—the emptied lungs—the struggling utterance. But the relapse—rarer and rarer now with each trial—would be at last scarce a drawback. "Nay," quoth Waife, "instead of a drawback, become but an orator, and you will convert a defect into a beauty."

Thus justly sanguine of the accomplishment of his life's chosen object, the scholar's gratitude to Waife was unspeakable. And seeing the man daily at last in his own cottage—Sophy's health restored to her cheeks, smiles to her lip, and cheered at her light fancy-work beside her

grandsire's elbow-chair, with fairy legends instilling perhaps golden truths—seeing Waife thus, the scholar mingled with gratitude a strange tenderness of respect. He knew naught of the vagrant's past—his reason might admit that in a position of life so at variance with the gifts natural and acquired of the singular basket-maker, there was something mysterious and suspicious. But he blushed to think that he had ever ascribed to a flawed or wandering intellect the eccentricities of glorious Humor—abetted an attempt to separate an old age so innocent and genial from a childhood so fostered and so fostering. And sure I am that if the whole world had risen up to point the finger of scorn at the one-eyed cripple, George Morley, the well-born gentleman — the refined scholar — the spotless Churchman—would have given him his arm to lean upon, and walked by his side unashamed.

CHAPTER IV.

To judge human character rightly, a man may sometimes have very small experience, provided he has a very large heart.

Numa Pompilius did not more conceal from notice the lessons he received from Egeria than did George Morley those which he received from the basket-maker. Natural, indeed, must be his wish for secrecy—pretty story it would be for Humberston, its future rector learning how to preach a sermon from an old basket-maker! But he had a nobler and more imperious motive for discretion—his honor was engaged to it. Waife exacted a promise that he would regard the intercourse between them as strictly private and confidential.

"It is for my sake I ask this," said Waife, frankly, "though I might say it was for yours." The Oxonian promised, and was bound. Fortunately, Lady Montfort quitting the Great House the very day after George had first encountered the basket-maker, and writing word that she should not return to it for some weeks —George was at liberty to avail himself of her lord's general invitation to make use of Montfort Court as his lodgings when in the neighborhood, which the proprieties of the world would not have allowed him to do while Lady Montfort was there without either host or female guests. Accordingly, he took up his abode in a corner of the vast palace, and was easily enabled, when he pleased, to traverse unobserved the solitudes of the park, gain the water-side, or stroll thence through the thick copse leading to Waife's cottage, which bordered the park-pales, solitary, sequestered, beyond sight of the neighboring village. The great house all to himself, George was brought in contact with no one to whom, in unguarded moments, he could even have let out a hint of his new acquaintance, except the clergyman of the parish, a worthy man, who lived in strict retirement upon a scanty stipend. For the Marquis was the lay impropriator; the living was therefore but a very poor vicarage, below the acceptance of a Vipont or a Vipont's tutor—sure to go to a quiet worthy man forced to live in strict retirement. George saw too little of this clergyman either to let out secrets or pick up information. From him, however, George did incidentally learn that Waife had some months previously visited the village, and proposed to the bailiff to take the cottage and osier land, which he now rented—that he represented himself as having known an old basket-maker who had dwelt there many years ago, and had learned the basket craft of that long deceased operative. As he offered a higher rent than the bailiff could elsewhere obtain, and as the bailiff was desirous to get credit with Mr. Carr Vipont for improving the property, by reviving thereon an art which had fallen into desuetude, the bargain was struck, provided the candidate, being a stranger to the place, could furnish the bailiff with any satisfactory reference. Waife had gone away, saying he should shortly return with the requisite testimonial. In fact, poor man, as we know, he was then counting on a good word from Mr. Hartopp. He had not, however, returned for some months. The cottage having been meanwhile wanted for the temporary occupation of an under gamekeeper, while his own was under repair, fortunately remained unlet. Waife, on returning, accompanied by his little girl, had referred the bailiff to a respectable house-agent and collector of street rents in Bloomsbury, who wrote word that a lady, then abroad, had authorized him, as the agent employed in the management of a house property from which much of her income was derived, not only to state that Waife was a very intelligent man, likely to do well whatever he undertook, but also to guarantee, if required, the punctual payment of the rent for any holding of which he became the occupier. On this the agreement was concluded—the basket-maker installed. In the immediate neighborhood there was no custom for basket-work, but Waife's performances were so neat, and some so elegant and fanciful, that he had no difficulty in contracting with a large tradesman (not at Humberston, but a more distant and yet more thriving town about twenty miles off), for as much of such work as he could supply. Each week the carrier took his goods and brought back the payments; the profits amply sufficed for Waife's and Sophy's daily bread, with even more than the surplus set aside for the rent. For the rest, the basket-maker's cottage being at the farthest outskirts of the straggling village inhabited but by a laboring peasantry, his way of life was not much known, nor much inquired into. He seemed a harmless hard-working man—never seen at the beer-house, always seen with his neatly-dressed little grandchild in his quiet corner at church on Sundays—a civil, well-behaved man too, who touched his hat to the bailiff, and took it off to the vicar.

An idea prevailed that the basket-maker had spent much of his life in foreign parts, favored partly by a sobriety of habits which is not altogether national, partly by something in his appearance, which, without being above his lowly calling, did not seem quite in keeping with it—outlandish in short—but principally by the fact that he had received since his arrival two letters with a foreign postmark. The idea befriended the old man; allowing it to be inferred that he had probably outlived the friends he had formerly left behind him in England, and on his return, been sufficiently fatigued with his rambles to drop contented in any corner of his native

soil, wherein he could find a quiet home, and earn by light toil a decent livelihood.

George, though naturally curious to know what had been the result of his communication to Mrs. Crane—whether it had led to Waife's discovery or caused him annoyance, had hitherto, however, shrunk from touching upon a topic which subjected himself to an awkward confession of officious intermeddling, and might appear an indirect and indelicate mode of prying into painful family affairs. But one day he received a letter from his father which disturbed him greatly, and induced him to break ground and speak to his preceptor frankly. In this letter the elder Mr. Morley mentioned incidentally, among other scraps of local news, that he had seen Mr. Hartopp, who was rather out of sorts, his good heart not having recovered the shock of having been abominably "taken in" by an impostor for whom he had conceived a great fancy, and to whose discovery George himself had providentially led (the father referring here to what George had told him of his first meeting with Waife, and his visit to Mrs. Crane), the impostor, it seemed, from what Mr. Hartopp let fall, not being a little queer in the head—as George had been led to surmise—but a very bad character. "In fact," added the elder Morley, "a character so bad, that Mr. Hartopp was too glad to give up the child, whom the man appears to have abducted, to her lawful protectors; and I suspect from what Hartopp said, though he does not like to own that he was taken in to so gross a degree, that he had been actually introducing to his fellow-townsfolk, and conferring familiarly, with a regular jail-bird—perhaps a burglar. How lucky for that poor, soft-headed, excellent Jos Hartopp—whom it is positively as inhuman to take in as if he were a born natural—that the lady you saw arrived in time to expose the snares laid for his benevolent credulity. But for that, Jos might have taken the fellow into his own house—(just like him!)—and been robbed by this time—perhaps murdered—Heaven knows!"

Incredulous and indignant, and longing to be empowered to vindicate his friend's fair name, George seized his hat, and strode quick along the path toward the basket-maker's cottage. As he gained the water-side he perceived Waife himself, seated on a mossy bank, under a gnarled fantastic thorn-tree, watching a deer as it came to drink, and whistling a soft mellow tune—the tune of an old English border-song. The deer lifted its antlers from the water, and turned its large bright eyes toward the opposite bank, whence the note came—listening and wistful. As George's step crushed the wild thyme, which the thorn-tree shadowed—"Hush," said Waife, "and mark how the rudest musical sound can affect the brute creation." He resumed the whistle—a clearer, louder, wilder tune—that of a lively hunting-song. The deer turned quickly round—uneasy, restless, tossed its antlers, and bounded through the fern. Waife again changed the key of his primitive music—a melancholy *belling* note, like the belling itself of a melancholy hart, but more modulated into sweetness. The deer arrested its flight, and, lured by the mimic sound, returned toward the water-side, slow and stately.

"I don't think the story of Orpheus charming the brutes was a fable—do you, Sir?" said Waife. "The rabbits about here know me already; and if I had but a fiddle I would undertake to make friends with that reserved and unsocial water-rat, on whom Sir Isaac in vain endeavors at present to force his acquaintance. Man commits a great mistake in not cultivating more intimate and amicable relations with the other branches of earth's great family. Few of them not more amusing than we are—naturally, for they have not our cares. And such variety of character, too, where you would least expect it!"

George Morley. "Very true: Cowper noticed marked differences of character in his favorite hares."

Waife. "Hares! I am sure that there are not two house-flies on a window-pane, two minnows in that water, that would not present to us interesting points of contrast as to temper and disposition. If house-flies and minnows could but coin money, or set up a manufacture—contrive something, in short, to buy or sell attractive to Anglo-Saxon enterprise and intelligence—of course we should soon have diplomatic relations with them; and our dispatches and newspapers would instruct us to a T in the characters and propensities of their leading personages. But where man has no pecuniary nor ambitious interests at stake in his commerce with any class of his fellow-creatures, his information about them is extremely confused and superficial. The best naturalists are mere generalizers, and think they have done a vast deal when they classify a species. What should we know about mankind if we had only a naturalist's definition of man? We only know mankind by knocking classification on the head, and studying each man as a class in himself. Compare Buffon with Shakspeare! Alas! Sir—can we never have a Shakspeare for house-flies and minnows?"

George Morley. "With all respect for minnows and house-flies, if we found another Shakspeare, he might be better employed, like his predecessor, in selecting individualities from the classifications of man."

Waife. "Being yourself a man, you think so—a house-fly might be of a different opinion. But permit me, at least, to doubt whether such an investigator would be better employed in reference to his own happiness, though I grant that he would be so in reference to your intellectual amusement and social interests. Poor Shakspeare! How much he must have suffered!"

George Morley. "You mean that he must have been racked by the passions he describes—bruised by collision with the hearts he dissects. That is not necessary to genius. The judge on his bench, summing up evidence, and charging the jury, has no need to have shared the temptations, or been privy to the acts, of the prisoner at the bar. Yet how consummate may be his analysis!"

"No," cried Waife, roughly. "No. Your illustration destroys your argument. The judge knows nothing of the prisoner! There are the circumstances—there is the law. By these he generalizes—by these he judges—right or wrong. But of the individual at the bar—of the world—the tremendous world within that individual heart—I repeat—he knows nothing. Did he

know, law and circumstance might vanish—human justice would be paralyzed. Ho, there! place that swart-visaged, ill-looking foreigner in the dock, and let counsel open the case—hear the witnesses depose! Oh, horrible wretch!—a murderer—unmanly murderer!—a defenseless woman smothered by caitiff hands! Hang him up—hang him up! 'Softly,' whispers the POET, and lifts the vail from the Assassin's heart. 'Lo! it is Othello the Moor!' What jury now dare find that criminal guilty?—what judge now will put on the black cap?—who now says, 'Hang him up—hang him up?'"

With such lifelike force did the Comedian vent this passionate outburst that he thrilled his listener with an awe akin to that which the convicted Moor gathers round himself at the close of the sublime drama. Even Sir Isaac was startled; and, leaving his hopeless pursuit of the water-rat, uttered a low bark, came to his master, and looked into his face with solemn curiosity.

WAIFE (relapsing into colloquial accents). "Why do we sympathize with those above us more than with those below? why with the sorrows of a king rather than those of a beggar? why does Sir Isaac sympathize with me more than (let that water-rat vex him ever so much) I can possibly sympathize with him? Whatever be the cause, see at least, Mr. Morley, one reason why a poor creature like myself finds it better employment to cultivate the intimacy of brutes than to prosecute the study of men. Among men, all are too high to sympathize with me; but I have known two friends who never injured nor betrayed me. Sir Isaac is one, Wamba was another. Wamba, Sir, the native of a remote district of the globe (two friends civilized Europe is not large enough to afford to any one man)—Wamba, Sir, was less gifted by nature, less refined by education than Sir Isaac; but he was a safe and trustworthy companion. Wamba, Sir, was—an opossum."

GEORGE MORLEY. "Alas, my dear Mr. Waife, I fear that men must have behaved very ill to you."

WAIFE. "I have no right to complain. I have behaved very ill to myself. When a man is his own enemy, he is very unreasonable if he expect other men to be his benefactors."

GEORGE MORLEY (with emotion). "Listen, I have a confession to make to you. I fear I have done you an injury—where, officiously, I meant to do a kindness." The scholar hurried on to narrate the particulars of his visit to Mrs. Crane. On concluding the recital, he added—"When again I met you here and learned that your Sophy was with you, I felt inexpressibly relieved. It was clear then, I thought, that your grandchild had been left to your care unmolested, either that you had proved not to be the person of whom the parties were in search, or family affairs had been so explained and reconciled, that my interference had occasioned you no harm. But to-day I have a letter from my father which disquiets me much. It seems that the persons in question did visit Gatesboro' and have maligned you to Mr. Hartopp. Understand me, I ask for no confidence which you may be unwilling to give; but if you will arm me with the power to vindicate your character from aspersions which I need not your assurance to hold unjust and false, I will not rest till that task be triumphantly accomplished."

WAIFE (in a tone calm but dejected). "I thank you with all my heart. But there is nothing to be done. I am glad that the subject did not start up between us until such little service as I could render you, Mr. Morley, was pretty well over. It would have been a pity if you had been compelled to drop all communication with a man of attainted character before you had learned how to manage the powers that will enable you hereafter to exhort sinners worse than I have been. Hush, Sir! you feel that, at least now, I am an inoffensive old man—laboring for a humble livelihood. You will not repeat here what you may have heard, or yet hear, to the discredit of my former life? You will not send me and my grandchild forth from our obscure refuge to confront a world with which we have no strength to cope? And, believing this, it only remains for me to say Fare-you-well, Sir."

"I should deserve to lose spe—spe—speech altogether," cried the Oxonian, gasping and stammering fearfully as he caught Waife firmly by the arm, "if I suffered—suff—suff—suff—"

"One, two! take time, Sir!" said the Comedian, softly. And with a sweet patience he reseated himself on the bank.

The Oxonian threw himself at length by the outcast's side; and with the noble tenderness of a nature as chivalrously Christian as Heaven ever gave to priest, he rested his folded hands upon Waife's shoulder, and looking him full and close in the face, said thus, slowly, deliberately, not a stammer,

"You do not guess what you have done for me; you have secured to me a home and a career—the wife of whom I must otherwise have despaired—the divine vocation on which all my earthly hopes were set, and which I was on the eve of renouncing—do not think these are obligations which can be lightly shaken off. If there are circumstances which forbid me to disabuse others of impressions which wrong you, imagine not that their false notions will affect my own gratitude—my own respect for you!"

"Nay, Sir! they ought—they must. Perhaps not your exaggerated gratitude for a service which you should not, however, measure by its effects on yourself, but by the slightness of the trouble it gave to me; not perhaps your gratitude—but your respect, yes."

"I tell you no! Do you fancy that I can not judge of a man's nature without calling on him to trust me with all the secrets—all the errors, if you will, of his past life? Will not the calling to which I may now hold myself destined give me power and commandment to absolve all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe? Oh, Mr. Waife! if in earlier days you have sinned, do you not repent? and how often, in many a lovely gentle sentence dropped unawares from your lips, have I had cause to know that you unfeignedly believe! Were I now clothed with sacred authority, could I not absolve you as a priest? Think you that, in the mean while, I dare judge you as a man? I—life's new recruit, guarded hitherto from temptation by careful parents and favoring fortune—*I* presume to judge, and judge harshly, the gray-haired veteran, wearied by the march, wounded in the battle!"

"You are a noble-hearted human being," said Waife, greatly affected. "And—mark my words—a mantle of charity so large you will live to wear as a robe of honor. But hear me, Sir! Mr. Hartopp also is a man infinitely charitable, benevolent, kindly, and, through all his simplicity, acutely shrewd. Mr. Hartopp, on hearing what was said against me, deemed me unfit to retain my grandchild, resigned the trust I had confided to him, and would have given me alms, no doubt, had I asked them, but not his hand. Take your hands, Sir, from my shoulder, lest the touch sully you."

George did take his hands from the vagrant's shoulder, but it was to grasp the hand that waived them off, and struggled to escape the pressure. "You are innocent, you are innocent! forgive me that I spoke to you of repentance, as if you had been guilty. I feel you are innocent—feel it by my own heart. You turn away. I defy you to say that you are guilty of what has been laid to your charge, of what has darkened your good name, of what Mr. Hartopp believed to your prejudice. Look me in the face and say, 'I am not innocent, I have not been belied.'"

Waife remained voiceless—motionless.

The young man, in whose nature lay yet unproved all those grand qualities of heart, without which never was there a grand orator, a grand preacher—qualities which grasp the results of argument, and arrive at the end of elaborate reasoning by sudden impulse—here released Waife's hand, rose to his feet, and, facing Waife, as the old man sate with face averted, eyes downcast, breast heaving, said, loftily,

"Forget that I may soon be the Christian minister whose duty bows his ear to the lips of shame and guilt—whose hand, when it points to Heaven, no mortal touch can sully—whose sublimest post is by the sinner's side. Look on me but as man and gentleman. See, I now extend this hand to you. If, as man and gentleman, you have done that which, could all hearts be read, all secrets known—human judgment reversed by Divine omniscience—forbids you to take this hand—*then* reject it—go hence—we part! But if no such act be on your conscience—however you submit to its imputation—THEN, in the name of Truth, as man and gentleman to man and gentleman, I command you to take this right hand, and in the name of that Honor which bears no paltering, I forbid you to disobey."

The vagabond rose, like the dead at the spell of a magician—took, as if irresistibly, the hand held out to him. And the scholar, overjoyed, fell on his breast, embracing him as a son.

"You know," said George, in trembling accents, "that the hand you have taken will never betray—never desert; but is it—is it really powerless to raise and to restore you to your place?"

"Powerless among your kind for that indeed," answered Waife, in accents still more tremulous. "All the kings of the earth are not strong enough to raise a name that has once been trampled into the mire. Learn that it is not only impossible for me to clear myself, but that it is equally impossible for me to confide to mortal being a single plea in defense if I am innocent, in extenuation if I am guilty. And saying this, and entreating you to hold it more merciful to condemn than to question me—for question is torture—I can not reject your pity; but it would be mockery to offer me respect!"

"What! not respect the fortitude which calumny can not crush? Would that fortitude be possible if you were not calm in the knowledge that no false witnesses can mislead the Eternal Judge? Respect you! yes—because I have seen you happy in despite of men, and therefore I know that the cloud around you is not the frown of Heaven."

"Oh," cried Waife, the tears rolling down his cheeks, "and not an hour ago I was jesting at human friendship—venting graceless spleen on my fellow-men! And now—now—Ah! Sir, Providence is so kind to me! And," said he, brushing away his tears, as the old arch smile began to play round the corner of his mouth—"and kind to me in the very quarter in which unkindness had most sorely smitten me. True, you directed toward me the woman who took from me my grandchild—who destroyed me in the esteem of good Mr. Hartopp. Well, you see, I have my sweet Sophy back again; we are in the home of all others I most longed for; and that woman—yes, I can, at least thus far, confide to you my secrets, so that you may not blame yourself for sending her to Gatesboro'—that very woman knows of my shelter—furnished me with the very reference necessary to obtain it; has freed my grandchild from a loathsome bondage, which I could not have legally resisted; and should new persecutions chase us, will watch, and warn, and help us. And if you ask me how this change in her was effected—how, when we had abandoned all hope of green fields, and deemed that only in the crowd of a city we could escape those who pursued us when discovered there, though I fancied myself an adept in disguise, and the child and the dog were never seen out of the four garret walls in which I hid them; if you ask me, I say, to explain how that very woman was suddenly converted from a remorseless foe into a saving guardian, I can only answer, by no wit, no device, no persuasive art of mine. Providence softened her heart, and made it kind, just at the moment when no other agency on earth could have rescued us from—from—"

"Say no more—I guess! the paper this woman showed me was a legal form authorizing your poor little Sophy to be given up to the care of a father. I guess! of that father you would not speak ill to me; yet from that father you would save your grandchild. Say no more. And you quiet home—your humble employment, really content you?"

"Oh, if such a life can but last! Sophy is so well, so cheerful, so happy. Did not you hear her singing the other day? She never used to sing! But we had not been here a week when song broke out from her untaught, as from a bird. But if any ill report of me travel hither from Gatesboro', or elsewhere, we should be sent away, and the bird would be mute in my thorn-tree—Sophy would sing no more."

"Do not fear that slander shall drive you hence. Lady Montfort, you know, is my cousin, but you know not—few do—how thoroughly generous and gentle-hearted she is. I will speak of you to her—Oh, do not look alarmed. She will take my word when I tell her 'that is a

good man;' and if she ask more, it will be enough to say, 'those who have known better days are loth to speak to strangers of the past.'"

"I thank you earnestly, sincerely," said Waife, brightening up. "One favor more—if you saw in the formal document shown to you, or retain on your memory, the name of—of the person authorized to claim Sophy as his child, you will not mention it to Lady Montfort. I am not sure if ever she heard that name, but she may have done so—and—and—" He paused a moment, and seemed to muse; then went on, not concluding his sentence. "You are so good to me, Mr. Morley, that I wish to confide in you as far as I can. Now, you see I am already an old man, and my chief object is to raise up a friend for Sophy when I am gone—a friend in her own sex, Sir. Oh, you can not guess how I long—how I yearn to view that child under the holy fostering eyes of woman. Perhaps if Lady Montfort saw my pretty Sophy she might take a fancy to her. Oh, if she did—if she did! And Sophy," added Waife, proudly, "*has* a right to respect. She is not like me—any hovel good enough for me. But for her! —Do you know that I conceived that hope—that the hope helped to lead me back here when, months ago, I was at Humberston, intent upon rescuing Sophy; and saw, though," observed Waife, with a sly twitch of the muscles round his mouth, "I had no right at that precise moment to be seeing any thing—Lady Montfort's humane fear for a blind old impostor, who was trying to save his dog—a black dog, Sir, who had dyed his hair—from her carriage wheels. And the hope became stronger still, when, the first Sunday I attended yon village church, I again saw that fair—wondrously fair—face at the far end—fair as moonlight and as melancholy. Strange it is, Sir, that I, naturally a boisterous, mirthful man, and now a shy, skulking fugitive—feel more attracted, more allured toward a countenance, in proportion as I read there the trace of sadness. I feel less abashed by my own nothingness—more emboldened to approach and say, 'Not so far apart from me; thou, too, hast suffered.' Why is this?"

GEORGE MORLEY. "'The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God;' but the fool hath not said in his heart that there is no sorrow—pithy and most profound sentence; intimating the irrefragable chain that binds men to the Father. And where the chain tightens the children are closer drawn together. But to your wish—I will remember it. And when my cousin returns she shall see your Sophy."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Waife, being by nature unlucky, considers that, in proportion as Fortune brings him good luck, Nature converts it into bad. He suffers Mr. George Morley to go away in his debt, and Sophy fears that he will be dull in consequence.

GEORGE MORLEY, a few weeks after the conversation last recorded, took his departure from Montfort Court, prepared, without a scruple, to present himself for ordination to the friendly bishop. From Waife he derived more than the cure of a disabling infirmity; he received those hints which, to a man who has the natural temperament of an orator, so rarely united with that of the scholar, expedite the mastery of the art which makes the fleeting human voice an abiding, imperishable power. The grateful teacher exhausted all his lore upon the pupil whose genius he had freed—whose heart had subdued himself. Before leaving, George was much perplexed how to offer to Waife any other remuneration than that which, in Waife's estimate, had already overpaid all the benefits he had received—viz., unquestioning friendship and pledged protection. It need scarcely be said that George thought the man to whom he owed fortune and happiness was entitled to something beyond that moral recompense. But he found, at the first delicate hint, that Waife would not hear of money, though the ex-Comedian did not affect any very Quixotic notions on that practical subject. "To tell you the truth, Sir, I have rather a superstition against having more money in my hands than I know what to do with. It has always brought me bad luck. And what is very hard—the bad luck stays, but the money goes. There was that splendid sum I made at Gainsboro'. You should have seen me counting it over. I could not have had a prouder or more swelling heart if I had been that great man Mr. Elwes the miser. And what bad luck it brought me, and how it all frittered itself away! Nothing to show for it but a silk ladder and an old hurdy-gurdy, and I sold *them* at half-price. Then, when I had the accident which cost me this eye, the railway people behaved so generously, gave me £120—think of that! And before three days the money was all gone!"

"How was that?" said George, half amused, half pained; "stolen, perhaps?"

"Not so," answered Waife, somewhat gloomily, "but restored. A poor dear old man, who thought very ill of me—and I don't wonder at it—was reduced from great wealth to great poverty. While I was laid up my landlady read a newspaper to me, and in that newspaper was an account of his reverse and destitution. But I was accountable to him for the balance of an old debt, and that, with the doctor's bills, quite covered my £120. I hope he does not think quite so ill of me now. But the money brought good luck to him rather than to me. Well, Sir, if you were now to give me money I should be on the look-out for some mournful calamity. Gold is not natural to me. Some day, however, by-and-by, when you are inducted into your living, and have become a renowned preacher, and have plenty to spare, with an idea that you would feel more comfortable in your mind if you had done something royal for the basket-maker, I will ask you to help me to make up a sum which I am trying by degrees to save—an enormous sum—as much as I paid away from my railway compensation—I owe it to the lady who lent it to release Sophy from an engagement which I—certainly without any remorse of conscience—made the child break."

"Oh yes! What is the amount? Let me at least repay that debt."

"Not yet. The lady can wait—and she would be pleased to wait, because she deserves to wait—it would be unkind to her to pay it off at once. But in the mean while, if you could send me a few good books for Sophy?—instructive; yet

not very, very dry. And a French dictionary—I can teach her French when the winter days close in. You see I am not above being paid, Sir. But, Mr. Morley, there is a great favor you can do me."

"What is it? Speak."

"Cautiously refrain from doing me a great disservice! You are going back to your friends and relations. Never speak of me to them. Never describe me and my odd ways. Name not the lady, nor — nor — nor — the man who claimed Sophy. Your friends might nôt hurt me, others might. Talk travels. The Hare is not long in its form when it has a friend in a Hound that gives tongue. Promise what I ask. Promise it as 'man and gentleman.'"

"Certainly. Yet I have one relation to whom I should like, with your permission, to speak of you—with whom I could wish you acquainted. He is so thorough a man of the world that he might suggest some method to clear your good name, which you yourself would approve. My uncle, Colonel Morley—"

"On no account!" cried Waife, almost fiercely, and he evinced so much anger and uneasiness that it was long before George could pacify him by the most earnest assurances that his secret should be inviolably kept, and his injunctions faithfully obeyed. No men of the world consulted how to force him back to the world of men that he fled from! No colonels to scan him with martinet eyes, and hint how to pipe-clay a tarnish! Waife's apprehensions gradually allayed, and his confidence restored, one fine morning George took leave of his eccentric benefactor.

Waife and Sophy stood gazing after him from their garden-gate; the cripple leaning lightly on the child's arm. She looked with anxious fondness into the old man's thoughtful face, and clung to him more closely as she looked.

"Will you not be dull, poor grandy? Will you not miss him?"

"A little at first," said Waife, rousing himself. "Education is a great thing. An educated mind, provided that it does us no mischief —which is not always the case—can not be withdrawn from our existence without leaving a blank behind. Sophy, we must seriously set to work and educate ourselves!"

"We will, grandy dear," said Sophy, with decision; and a few minutes afterward, "If I can become very, very clever, you will not pine so much after that gentleman—will you, grandy?"

CHAPTER VI.

Being a chapter that comes to an untimely end.

Winter was far advanced when Montfort Court was again brightened by the presence of its lady. A polite letter from Mr. Carr Vipont had reached her before leaving Windsor, suggesting how much it would be for the advantage of the Vipont interest if she would consent to visit for a month or two the seat in Ireland, which had been too long neglected, and at which my lord would join her on his departure from his Highland moors. So to Ireland went Lady Montfort. My lord did not join her there; but Mr. Carr Vipont deemed it desirable for the Vipont interest that the wedded pair should reunite at Montfort Court, where all the Vipont family were invited to witness their felicity or mitigate their *ennui*.

But, before proceeding another stage in this history, it becomes a just tribute of respect to the great House of Vipont to pause and place its past records and present grandeur in fuller display before the reverential reader. The House of Vipont! What am I about? The House of Vipont requires a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VII.

The House of Vipont.—"*Majora canamus.*"

The House of Vipont! Looking back through ages, it seems as if the House of Vipont were one continuous, living idiosyncrasy, having in its progressive development a connected unity of thought and action, so that through all the changes of its outward form it had been moved and guided by the same single spirit—"*Le roi est mort—vive le roi!*"—A Vipont dies—live the Vipont! Despite its high-sounding Norman name, the House of Vipont was no House at all for some generations after the Conquest. The first Vipont who emerged from the obscurity of time was a rude soldier, of Gascon origin, in the reign of Henry II.; one of the thousand fighting men who sailed from Milford Haven with the stout Earl of Pembroke, on that strange expedition which ended in the conquest of Ireland. This gallant man obtained large grants of land in that fertile island—some Mac or some O' vanished, and the House of Vipont rose.

During the reign of Richard I. the House of Vipont, though recalled to England (leaving its Irish acquisitions in charge of a fierce cadet, who served as middleman), excused itself from the Crusade, and, by marriage with a rich goldsmith's daughter, was enabled to lend moneys to those who indulged in that exciting but costly pilgrimage. In the reign of John the House of Vipont foreclosed its mortgages on lands thus pledged, and became possessed of a very fair property in England, as well as its fiefs in the sister isle.

The House of Vipont took no part in the troublesome politics of that day. Discreetly obscure, it attended to its own fortunes, and felt small interest in *Magna Charta*. During the reigns of the Plantagenet Edwards, who were great encouragers of mercantile adventure, the House of Vipont, shunning Creci, Bannockburn, and such profitless brawls, intermarried with London traders, and got many a good thing out of the Genoese. In the reign of Henry IV. the House of Vipont reaped the benefit of its past forbearance and modesty. Now, for the first time, the Viponts appear as belted knights—they have armorial bearings—they are Lancasterian to the back-bone—they are exceedingly indignant against heretics—they burn the Lollards—they have places in the household of Queen Joan, who was called a witch, but a witch is a very good friend when she wields a sceptre instead of a broomstick. And in proof of its growing importance, the House of Vipont marries a daughter of the then mighty House of Darrell. In the reign of Henry V., during

the invasion of France, the House of Vipont—being afraid of the dysentery which carried off more brave fellows than the field of Agincourt—contrived to be a minor. The Wars of the Roses puzzled the House of Vipont sadly. But it went through that perilous ordeal with singular tact and success. The manner in which it changed sides, each change safe, and most changes lucrative, is beyond all praise.

On the whole, it preferred the Yorkists; it was impossible to be actively Lancasterian, with Henry VI. of Lancaster always in prison. And thus, at the death of Edward IV., the House of Vipont was Baron Vipont of Vipont, with twenty manors. Richard III. counted on the House of Vipont, when he left London to meet Richmond at Bosworth—he counted without his host. The House of Vipont became again intensely Lancasterian, and was among the first to crowd round the litter in which Henry VII. entered the metropolis. In that reign it married a relation of Empson's—did the great House of Vipont! and as nobles of elder date had become scarce and poor, Henry VII. was pleased to make the House of Vipont an earl—the Earl of Montfort. In the reign of Henry VIII., instead of burning Lollards, the House of Vipont was all for the Reformation—it obtained the lands of two priories and one abbey. Gorged with that spoil, the House of Vipont, like an anaconda in the process of digestion, slept long. But no, it slept not. Though it kept itself still as a mouse during the reign of bloody Queen Mary (only letting it be known at court that the House of Vipont had strong papal leanings); though during the reigns of Elizabeth and James it made no noise, the House of Vipont was silently inflating its lungs, and improving its constitution. Slept, indeed! it was wide awake. Then it was that it began systematically its grand policy of alliances; then was it sedulously grafting its olive branches on the stems of those fruitful New Houses that had sprung up with the Tudors; then, alive to the spirit of the day, provident of the wants of the morrow, over the length and breadth of the land it wove the interlacing net-work of useful cousinhood! Then, too, it began to build palaces, to inclose parks—it traveled, too, a little—did the House of Vipont! It visited Italy—it conceived a taste; a very elegant House became the House of Vipont! And in James's reign, for the first time, the House of Vipont got the Garter. The Civil Wars broke out—England was rent. Peer and knight took part with one side or the other. The House of Vipont was again perplexed. Certainly at the commencement it was all for King Charles. But when King Charles took to fighting, the House of Vipont shook its sagacious head, and went about, like Lord Falkland, sighing "Peace, peace!" Finally it remembered its neglected estates in Ireland—its duties called it thither. To Ireland it went, discreetly sad, and, marrying a kinswoman of Lord Fauconberg—the only popular and safe connection formed by the Lord Protector's family—it was safe when Cromwell visited Ireland; and no less safe when Charles II. was restored to England. During the reign of the merry monarch the House of Vipont was a courtier, married a beauty, got the Garter again, and, for the first time, became the fashion. Fashion began to be a Power. In the reign of James II. the House of Vipont again contrived to be a minor, who came of age just in time to take the oaths of fealty to William and Mary. In case of accidents, the House of Vipont kept on friendly terms with the exiled Stuarts, but it wrote no letters, and got into no scrapes. It was not, however, till the Government, under Sir R. Walpole, established the constitutional and parliamentary system which characterizes modern freedom that the puissance accumulated through successive centuries by the House of Vipont became pre-eminently visible. By that time its lands were vast, its wealth enormous; its parliamentary influence, as "a Great House," was now a part of the British Constitution. At this period the House of Vipont found it convenient to rend itself into two grand divisions—the peer's branch and the commoner's. The House of Commons had become so important that it was necessary for the House of Vipont to be represented there by a great commoner. Thus arose the family of Carr Vipont. That division—owing to a marriage settlement favoring a younger son by the heiress of the Carrs—carried off a good slice from the estate of the earldom—*uno averso, non deficit alter;* the earldom mourned, but replaced the loss by two wealthy wedlocks of its own; and had since seen cause to rejoice that its power in the Upper Chamber was strengthened by such aid in the Lower. For, thanks to its parliamentary influence, and the aid of the great commoner, in the reign of George III. the House of Vipont became a Marquis. From that time to the present day the House of Vipont had gone on prospering and progressive. It was to the aristocracy what the *Times* newspaper is to the press. The same quick sympathy with public feeling—the same unity of tone and purpose—the same adaptability—and something of the same lofty tone of superiority to the petty interests of party. It may be conceded that the House of Vipont was less brilliant than the *Times* newspaper, but eloquence and wit, necessary to the duration of a newspaper, were not necessary to that of the House of Vipont. Had they been so, it would have had them!

The Head of the House of Vipont rarely condescended to take office. With a rent-roll loosely estimated at about £170,000 a year, it is beneath a man to take from the public a paltry five or six thousand a year, and undergo all the undignified abuse of popular assemblies, and "a ribald press." But it was a matter of course that the House of Vipont should be represented in any cabinet that a constitutional monarch could be advised to form. Since the time of Walpole, a Vipont was always in the service of his country, except in those rare instances when the country was infamously misgoverned. The cadets of the House, or the senior member of the great commoner's branch of it, sacrificed their ease to fulfill that duty. The Montfort marquises in general were contented with situations of honor in the household, as of Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, or Master of the Horse, etc.—not onerous dignities; and even these they only deigned to accept on those especial occasions when danger threatened the Star of Brunswick, and the sense of its exalted station forbade the House of Vipont to leave its country in the dark.

Great Houses like that of Vipont assist the work of civilization by the law of their existence. They are sure to have a spirited and wealthy tenantry, to whom, if but for the sake of that popular character which doubles political influence, they are liberal and kindly landlords. Under their sway fens and sands become fertile—agricultural experiments are tested on a large scale—cattle and sheep improve in breed—national capital augments, and, springing beneath the plowshare, circulates indirectly to speed the ship and animate the loom. Had there been no Woburn, no Holkham, no Montfort Court, England would be the poorer by many a million. Our great Houses tend also to the refinement of national taste; they have their show-places, their picture-galleries, their beautiful grounds. The humblest drawing-rooms owe an elegance or comfort—the smallest garden, a flower or esculent—to the importations which luxury borrowed from abroad, or the inventions it stimulated at home, for the original benefit of great Houses. Having a fair share of such merits, in common with other great Houses, the House of Vipont was not without good qualities peculiar to itself. Precisely because it was the most egotistical of Houses, filled with the sense of its own identity, and guided by the instincts of its own conservation, it was a very civil, good-natured House—courteous, generous, hospitable; a House (I mean the Head of it—not, of course, all its subordinate members, including even the august Lady Selina) that could bow graciously, and shake hands with you. Even if you had no vote yourself, you might have a cousin who had a vote. And once admitted into the family, the House adopted you; you had only to marry one of its remotest relations, and the House sent you a wedding present; and at every general election invited you to rally round your connection—the Marquis. Therefore, next only to the Established Church, the House of Vipont was that British institution the roots of which were the most widely spread.

Now the Viponts had for long generations been an energetic race. Whatever their defects, they had exhibited shrewdness and vigor. The late Marquis (grandfather to the present) had been, perhaps, the ablest (that is, done most for the House of Vipont) of them all. Of a grandiose and superb mode of living—of a majestic deportment—of princely manners—of a remarkable talent for the management of all business, whether private or public—a perfect enthusiast for the House of Vipont, and aided by a marchioness in all respects worthy of him, he might be said to be the culminating flower of the venerable stem. But the present lord, succeeding to the title as a mere child, was a melancholy contrast, not only to his grandsire, but to the general character of his progenitors. Before his time every head of the House had done something for it—even the most frivolous had contributed; one had collected the pictures, another the statues, a third the medals, a fourth had amassed the famous Vipont library; while others had at least married heiresses, or augmented, through ducal lines, the splendor of the interminable cousinhood. The present marquis was literally *nil*. The pith of the Viponts was not in him. He looked well, he dressed well; if life were only the dumb show of a tableau, he would have been a paragon of a Marquis. But he was like the watches we give to little children, with a pretty gilt dial-plate, and no works in them. He was thoroughly inert—there was no winding him up; he could not manage his property—he could not answer his letters—very few of them could he even read through. Politics did not interest him, nor literature, nor field-sports. He shot, it is true, but mechanically—wondering, perhaps, why he did shoot. He attended races, because the House of Vipont kept a racing stud. He bet on his own horses, but if they lost showed no vexation. Admirers (no Marquis of Montfort could be wholly without them) said, "What fine temper! what good-breeding!" it was nothing but constitutional apathy. No one could call him a bad man—he was not a profligate, an oppressor, a miser, a spendthrift; he would not have taken the trouble to be a bad man on any account. Those who beheld his character at a distance would have called him an exemplary man. The more conspicuous duties of his station, subscriptions, charities, the maintenance of grand establishments, the encouragement of the fine arts, were virtues admirably performed for him by others. But the phlegm or nullity of his being was not, after all, so complete as I have made it, perhaps, appear. He had one susceptibility which is more common with women than with men—the susceptibility to *pique*. His *amour propre* was unforgiving—pique that, and he could do a rash thing, a foolish thing, a spiteful thing—pique that, and, prodigious! the watch went! He had a rooted pique against his marchioness. Apparently he had conceived this pique from the very first. He showed it passively by supreme neglect; he showed it actively by removing her from all the spheres of power which naturally fall to the wife when the husband shuns the details of business. Evidently he had a dread lest any one should say, "Lady Montfort influences my lord." Accordingly, not only the management of his estates fell to Carr Vipont, but even of his gardens, his household, his domestic arrangements. It was Carr Vipont or Lady Selina who said to Lady Montfort, "Give a ball;" "You should ask so and so to dinner." "Montfort was much hurt to see the old lawn at the Twickenham Villa broken up by those new *bosquets*. True, it is settled on you as a jointure house, but for that very reason Montfort is sensitive," etc., etc. In fact, they were virtually as separated, my lord and my lady, as if legally disunited, and as if Carr Vipont and Lady Selina were trustees or intermediaries in any polite approach to each other. But, on the other hand, it is fair to say that where Lady Montfort's sphere of action did not interfere with her husband's plans, habits, likings, dislikings, jealous apprehensions, that she should be supposed to have any ascendency over what exclusively belonged to himself as *Roi fainéant* of the Vipont's, she was left free as air. No attempt at masculine control or conjugal advice. At her disposal was wealth without stint—every luxury the soft could desire—every gewgaw the vain could covet. Had her pin-money, which was in itself the revenue of an ordinary peeress, failed to satisfy her wants—had she grown tired of wearing the family diamonds and coveted new

gems from Golconda—a single word to Carr Vipont or Lady Selina would have been answered by a *carte blanche* on the Bank of England. But Lady Montfort had the misfortune not to be extravagant in her tastes. Strange to say, in the world Lord Montfort's marriage was called a love match; he had married a portionless girl, daughter to one of his poorest and obscurest cousins, against the uniform policy of the House of Vipont, which did all it could for poor cousins except marrying them to its chief. But Lady Montfort's conduct in these trying circumstances was admirable and rare. Few affronts can humiliate us unless we resent them—and in vain. Lady Montfort had that exquisite dignity which gives to submission the grace of cheerful acquiescence. That in the gay world flatterers should gather round a young wife so eminently beautiful, and so wholly left by her husband to her own guidance, was inevitable. But at the very first insinuated compliment or pathetic condolence, Lady Montfort, so meek in her household, was haughty enough to have daunted Lovelace. She was thus very early felt to be beyond temptation, and the boldest passed on nor presumed to tempt. She was unpopular; called "proud and freezing;" she did not extend the influence of The House; she did not confirm its fashion—fashion which necessitates social ease, and which no rank, no wealth, no virtue can of themselves suffice to give. And this failure on her part was a great offense in the eyes of the House of Vipont. "She does absolutely nothing for us," said Lady Selina; but Lady Selina in her heart was well pleased that to her in reality thus fell, almost without a rival, the female representation, in the great world, of the Vipont honors. Lady Selina was fashion itself.

Lady Montfort's social peculiarity was in the eagerness with which she sought the society of persons who enjoyed a reputation for superior intellect, whether statesmen, lawyers, authors, philosophers, artists. Intellectual intercourse seemed as if it was her native atmosphere, from which she was habitually banished, to which she returned with an instinctive yearning and a new zest of life; yet was she called, even here, nor seemingly without justice—capricious and unsteady in her likings. These clever personages, after a little while, all seemed to disappoint her expectations of them; she sought the acquaintance of each with cordial earnestness; slid from the acquaintance with weary languor; never, after all, less a'one than when alone.

And so wondrous lovely! Nothing so rare as beauty of the high type; genius and beauty, indeed, are both rare; genius, which is the beauty of the mind—beauty, which is the genius of the body. But, of the two, beauty is the rarer. All of us can count on our fingers some forty or fifty persons of undoubted and illustrious genius, including those famous in action, letters, art. But can any of us remember to have seen more than four or five specimens of first-rate ideal beauty? Whosoever had seen Lady Montfort would have ranked her among such four or five in his recollection. There was in her face that lustrous dazzle to which the Latin poet, perhaps, refers when he speaks of the

> "Nitor
> Splendentis Pario marmore purius . . .
> Et voltus, nimium lubricus adspici,"

and which an English poet, with the less sensuous but more spiritual imagination of northern genius, has described in lines that an English reader may be pleased to see rescued from oblivion:

> "Her face was like the milky way i' the sky,
> A meeting of gentle lights without a name."*

The eyes so purely bright, the exquisite harmony of coloring between the dark (not *too* dark) hair, and the ivory of the skin; such sweet radiance in the lip when it broke into a smile. And it was said that in her maiden day, before Caroline Lyndsay became Marchioness of Montfort, that smile was the most joyous thing imaginable. Absurd now; you would not think it, but that stately lady had been a wild, fanciful girl, with the merriest laugh and the quickest tear, filling the air round her with April sunshine. Certainly, no beings ever yet lived the life Nature intended them to live, nor had fair play for heart and mind, who contrived, by hook or by crook—to marry the wrong person!

CHAPTER VIII.

The interior of the Great House. The British Constitution at home in a Family Party.

GREAT was the family gathering that Christmas tide at Montfort Court. Thither flocked the cousins of the House in all degrees and of various ranks. From dukes who had nothing left to wish for that kings and cousinhoods can give, to briefless barristers and aspiring cornets, of equally good blood with the dukes—the superb family united its motley scions. Such réunions were frequent, they belonged to the hereditary policy of the House of Vipont. On this occasion the muster of the clan was more significant than usual; there was a "CRISIS" in the constitutional history of the British empire. A new Government had been suddenly formed within the last six weeks, which certainly portended some direful blow on our ancient institutions, for the House of Vipont had not been consulted in its arrangements, and was wholly unrepresented in the Ministry, even by a lordship of the Treasury. Carr Vipont had therefore summoned the patriotic and resentful kindred.

It is an hour or so after the conclusion of dinner. The gentlemen have joined the ladies in the state suite—a suite which the last Marquis had rearranged and redecorated in his old age—during the long illness that finally conducted him to his ancestors. During his earlier years that princely Marquis had deserted Montfort Court for a seat nearer to London, and therefore much more easily filled with that brilliant society of which he had been long the ornament and centre. Railways not then existing for the annihilation of time and space, and a journey to a northern county four days with post-horses, making the invitations even of a Marquis of Montfort unalluring to languid beauties and gouty ministers. But nearing the end of his worldly career, this long neglect of the dwelling identified with his hereditary titles smote the conscience of the illustrious sinner. And other occupations beginning to pall, his lordship, accompanied and cheered by a chaplain, who had a fine taste in the decorative arts, came resolute-

ly to Montfort Court; and there, surrounded with architects, and gilders, and upholsterers, redeemed his errors; and soothed by the reflection of the palace provided for his successor, added to his vaults—a coffin.

The suite expands before the eye. You are in the grand drawing-room, copied from that of Versailles. That is the picture, full length, of the late Marquis in his robes; its pendent is the late Marchioness, his wife. That table of malachite is a present from the Russian Emperor Alexander; that vase of Sèvre which rests on it was made for Marie Antoinette—see her portrait enameled in its centre. Through the open door at the far end your eye loses itself in a vista of other pompous chambers—the music-room, the statue hall, the orangery; other rooms there are appertaining to the suite—a ball-room fit for Babylon, a library that might have adorned Alexandria—but they are not lighted, nor required, on this occasion; it is strictly a family party, sixty guests and no more.

In the drawing-room three whist-tables carry off the more elderly and grave. The piano, in the music-room, attracts a younger group. Lady Selina Vipont's eldest daughter Honoria, a young lady not yet brought out, but about to be brought out the next season, is threading a wonderfully intricate German piece—

"Linked music long drawn out,'

with variations. Her science is consummate. No pains have been spared on her education; elaborately accomplished, she is formed to be the sympathizing spouse of a wealthy statesman. Lady Montfort is seated by an elderly duchess, who is good-natured, and a great talker; near her are seated two middle-aged gentlemen, who had been conversing with her till the duchess, having cut in, turned dialogue into monologue.

The elder of these two gentlemen is Mr. Carr Vipont, bald, with clipped parliamentary whiskers; values himself on a likeness to Canning, but with a portlier presence—looks a large-acred man. Carr Vipont has about £40,000 a year; has often refused office for himself, while taking care that other Viponts should have it; is a great authority in Committee business and the rules of the House of Commons; speaks very seldom, and at no great length, never arguing, merely stating his opinion, carries great weight with him, and as he votes, vote fifteen other members of the House of Vipont, besides admiring satellites. He can therefore turn divisions, and has decided the fate of cabinets. A pleasant man, a little consequential, but the reverse of haughty—unctuously overbearing. The other gentleman, to whom he is listening, is our old acquaintance Colonel Alban Vipont Morley—Darrell's friend—George's uncle—a man of importance, not inferior, indeed, to that of his kinsman Carr; an authority in club-rooms, an oracle in drawing-rooms, a first-rate man of the *beau monde*. Alban Morley, a younger brother, had entered the Guards young; retired, young also, from the Guards with the rank of colonel, and on receipt of a legacy from an old aunt, which, with the interest derived from the sum at which he sold his commission, allowed him a clear income of £1000 a year. This modest income sufficed for all his wants, fine gentleman though he was. He had refused to go into Parliament—refused a high place in a public department. Single himself, he showed his respect for wedlock by the interest he took in the marriages of other people—just as Earl Warwick, too wise to set up for a king, gratified his passion for royalty by becoming the king-maker. The colonel was exceedingly accomplished, a very fair scholar, knew most modern languages. In painting an amateur, in music a connoisseur; witty at times, and with wit of a high quality, but thrifty in the expenditure of it; too wise to be known as a wit. Manly too, a daring rider, who had won many a fox's brush, a famous deer-stalker, and one of the few English gentlemen who still keep up the noble art of fencing—twice a week to be seen, foil in hand, against all comers in Angelo's rooms. Thin, well-shaped—not handsome, my dear young lady, far from it, but with an air so thoroughbred, that, had you seen him in the day when the opera-house had a crush-room and a fops' alley—seen him in either of those resorts, surrounded by elaborate dandies, and showy beauty-men—dandies and beauty-men would have seemed to you second-rate and vulgar; and the eye, fascinated by that quiet form—plain in manner, plain in dress, plain in feature—you would have said, "How very distinguished it is to be so plain!" Knowing the great world from the core to the cuticle, and on that knowledge basing authority and position, Colonel Morley was not calculating—not cunning—not suspicious. His sagacity the more quick because its movements were straightforward. Intimate with the greatest, but sought, not seeking. Not a flatterer nor a parasite. But when his advice was asked (even if advice necessitated reproof), giving it with military candor. In fine, a man of such social reputation as rendered him an ornament and prop to the House of Vipont; and with unsuspected depths of intelligence and feeling which lay in the lower strata of his knowledge of this world, to witness of some other one, and justified Darrell in commending a boy like Lionel Haughton to the Colonel's friendly care and admonitory counsels. The Colonel, like other men, had his weakness, if weakness it *can* be called: he believed that the House of Vipont was not merely the Corinthian capital, but the embattled keep—not merely the *dulce decus*, but the *præsidium columenque rerum* of the British monarchy. He did not boast of his connection with the House; he did not provoke your spleen by enlarging on its manifold virtues; he would often have his harmless jest against its members or even against its pretensions, but such seeming evidences of forbearance or candor were cunning devices to mitigate envy. His devotion to the House was not obtrusive, it was profound. He loved the House of Vipont for the sake of England, he loved England for the sake of the House of Vipont. Had it been possible, by some tremendous reversal of the ordinary laws of nature, to dissociate the cause of England from the cause of the House of Vipont, the Colonel would have said, "Save at least the Ark of the Constitution! and rally round the old House!"

The Colonel had none of Guy Darrell's infirmity of family pride; he cared not a rush for mere pedigrees—much too liberal and enlightened for such obsolete prejudices. No! He knew the world too well not to be quite aware that old family and long pedigrees are of no use

to a man if he has not some money or some merit. But it was of use to a man to be a cousin of the House of Vipont, though without any money, without any merit at all. It was of use to be part and parcel of a British institution; it was of use to have a legitimate indefeasible right to share in the administration and patronage of an empire, on which (to use a novel illustration) "the sun never sets." You might want nothing for yourself—the Colonel and the Marquis equally wanted nothing for themselves; but man is not to be a selfish egotist! Man has cousins—his cousins may want something. Demosthenes denounces, in words that inflame every manly breast, the ancient Greek who does not love his POLIS or State, even though he take nothing from it but barren honor, and contribute toward it—a great many disagreeable taxes. As the POLIS to the Greek, was the House of Vipont to Alban Vipont Morley. It was the most beautiful touching affection imaginable! Whenever the House was in difficulties—whenever it was threatened by a CRISIS—the Colonel was by its side, sparing no pains, neglecting no means, to get the Ark of the Constitution back into smooth water. That duty done, he retired again into private life, and scorned all other reward than the still whisper of applauding conscience.

"Yes," said Alban Morley, whose voice, though low and subdued in tone, was extremely distinct, with a perfect enunciation, "Yes, it is quite true, my nephew has taken orders—his defect in speech, if not quite removed, has ceased to be any obstacle, even to eloquence; an occasional stammer may be effective—it increases interest, and when the right word comes, there is the charm of surprise in it. I do not doubt that George will be a very distinguished clergyman."

MR. CARR VIPONT. "We want one—the House wants a very distinguished clergyman; we have none at this moment—not a bishop—not even a dean; all mere parish parsons, and among them not one we could push. Very odd, with more than forty livings too. But the Viponts seldom take to the Church kindly—George must be pushed. The more I think of it, the more we want a bishop: a bishop would be useful in the present CRISIS. (Looking round the rooms proudly, and softening his voice.) A numerous gathering, Morley! This demonstration will strike terror in Downing Street—eh! The old House stands firm—never was a family so united; all here, I think—that is, all worth naming—all, except Sir James, whom Montfort chooses to dislike, and George—and George comes to-morrow."

COLONEL MORLEY. "You forget the most eminent of all our connections—the one who could indeed strike terror into Downing Street, were his voice to be heard again!"

CARR VIPONT. "Whom do you mean? Ah, I know!—Guy Darrell. His wife was a Vipont—and he is not here. But he has long since ceased to communicate with any of us—the only connection that ever fell away from the house of Vipont—especially in a CRISIS like the present. Singular man! For all the use he is to us he might as well be dead! But he has a fine fortune—what will he do with it?"

THE DUCHESS. "My dear lady Montfort, you have hurt yourself with that paper-cutter."

LADY MONTFORT. "No, indeed. Hush! we are disturbing Mr. Carr Vipont."

The Duchess, in awe of Carr Vipont, sinks her voice, and gabbles on—whisperously.

CARR VIPONT (resuming the subject). "A very fine fortune—what will he do with it?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "I don't know, but I had a letter from him some months ago."

CARR VIPONT. "You had—and never told me!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Of no importance to you, my dear Carr. His letter merely introduced to me a charming young fellow—a kinsman of his own (no Vipont)—Lionel Haughton, son of poor Charlie Haughton, whom you may remember."

CARR VIPONT. "Yes, a handsome scamp—went to the dogs. So Darrell takes up Charlie's son—what! as his heir?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "In his letter to me he anticipated that question in the negative."

CARR VIPONT. "Has Darrell any nearer kinsmen?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Not that I know of."

CARR VIPONT. "Perhaps he will select one of his wife's family for his heir—a Vipont; I should not wonder."

COLONEL MORLEY (dryly). "I should. But why may not Darrell marry again? I always thought he would—I think so still."

CARR VIPONT (glancing toward his own daughter Honoria). "Well, a wife well-chosen might restore him to society, and to us. Pity, indeed, that so great an intellect should be suspended—a voice so eloquent hushed. You are right; in this CRISIS, Guy Darrell once more in the House of Commons, we should have all we require—an orator, a debater! Very odd, but at this moment we have no speakers—WE, the Viponts!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Yourself?"

CARR VIPONT. "You are too kind. I can speak on occasions; but regularly, no. Too much drudgery—not young enough to take to it now. So you think Darrell will marry again? A remarkably fine-looking fellow when I last saw him: not old yet; I dare say, well-preserved. I wish I had thought of asking him here—Montfort!" (Lord Montfort, with one or two male friends, was passing by toward a billiard-room, opening through a side-door from the regular suite)—"Montfort! only think, we forgot to invite Guy Darrell. Is it too late before our party breaks up?"

LORD MONTFORT (sullenly). "I don't choose Guy Darrell to be invited to my house."

Carr Vipont was literally stunned by a reply so contumacious. Lord Montfort demur at what Carr Vipont suggested! He could not believe his senses.

"Not choose, my dear Montfort! you are joking. A monstrous clever fellow, Guy Darrell, and at this CRISIS—"

"I hate clever fellows—no such bores!" said Lord Montfort, breaking from the caressing clasp of Carr Vipont, and stalking away.

"Spare your regrets, my dear Carr," said Colonel Morley. "Darrell is not in England—I rather believe he is in Verona." Therewith the Colonel sauntered toward the group gathered round the piano. A little time afterward Lady Montfort escaped from the Duchess, and, min-

gling courteously with her livelier guests, found herself close to Colonel Morley. "Will you give me my revenge at chess?" she asked, with her rare smile. The Colonel was charmed. As they sat down and ranged their men, Lady Montfort remarked, carelessly—

"I overheard you say you had lately received a letter from Mr. Darrell. Does he write as if well—cheerful? You remember that I was much with his daughter, much in his house, when I was a child. He was ever most kind to me." Lady Montfort's voice here faltered.

"He writes with no reference to himself, his health or his spirits. But his young kinsman described him to me as in good health—wonderfully young-looking for his years. But cheerful—no! Darrell and I entered the world together; we were friends as much as a man so busy and so eminent as he could be friends with a man like myself—indolent by habit, and obscure out of Mayfair. I know his nature; we both know something of his family sorrows. He can not be happy! Impossible!—alone—childless—secluded. Poor Darrell, abroad now; in Verona, too!—the dullest place! in mourning still for Romeo and Juliet!—'Tis your turn to move. In his letter Darrell talked of going on to Greece, Asia—penetrating into the depths of Africa—the wildest schemes! Dear County Guy, as we called him at Eton!—what a career his might have been! Don't let us talk of him, it makes me mournful. Like Goethe, I avoid painful subjects upon principle."

Lady Montfort. "No—we will not talk of him. No—I take the Queen's pawn. No, we will not talk of him!—no!"

The game proceeded; the Colonel was within three moves of checkmating his adversary. Forgetting the resolution come to, he said, as she paused, and seemed despondently meditating a hopeless defense—

"Pray, my fair cousin, what makes Montfort dislike my old friend Darrell?"

"Dislike! Does he? I don't know. Vanquished again, Colonel Morley!" She rose; and, as he restored the chessmen to their box, she leaned thoughtfully over the table.

"This young kinsman—will he not be a comfort to Mr. Darrell?"

"He would be a comfort and a pride to a father; but to Darrell, so distant a kinsman—comfort!—why and how? Darrell will provide for him, that is all. A very gentlemanlike young man—gone to Paris by my advice—wants polish and knowledge of life. When he comes back he must enter society; I have put his name up at White's; may I introduce him to you?"

Lady Montfort hesitated, and, after a pause, said, almost rudely, "No."

She left the Colonel, slightly shrugging his shoulders, and passed into the billiard-room with a quick step. Some ladies were already there, looking at the players. Lord Montfort was chalking his cue. Lady Montfort walked straight up to him; her color was heightened; her lip was quivering; she placed her hand on his shoulder with a wifelike boldness. It seemed as if she had come there to seek him from an impulse of affection. She asked with a hurried fluttering kindness of voice, "If he had been successful?" and called him by his Christian name. Lord Montfort's countenance, before merely apathetic, now assumed an expression of extreme distaste. "Come to teach me to make a cannon, I suppose!" he said, mutteringly, and turning from her, contemplated the balls and missed the cannon.

"Rather in my way, Lady Montfort," said he then, and retiring to a corner, said no more.

Lady Montfort's countenance became still more flushed. She lingered a moment, returned to the drawing-room, and for the rest of the evening was uncommonly animated, gracious, fascinating. As she retired with her lady guests for the night, she looked round, saw Colonel Morley, and held out her hand to him. "Your nephew comes here to-morrow," said she, "my old playfellow; impossible quite to forget old friends—good-night."

CHAPTER IX.

"Les extremes se touchent."

The next day the gentlemen were dispersed out of doors—a large shooting party. Those who did not shoot, walked forth to inspect the racing stud or the model farm. The ladies had taken their walk; some were in their own rooms, some in the reception rooms, at work, or reading, or listening to the piano—Honoria Carr Vipont again performing. Lady Montfort was absent; Lady Selina kindly supplied the hostess's place. Lady Selina was embroidering, with great skill and taste, a pair of slippers for her eldest boy, who was just entered at Oxford, having left Eton with a reputation of being the neatest dresser, and not the worst cricketer, of that renowned educational institute. It is a mistake to suppose that fine ladies are not sometimes very fond mothers and affectionate wives. Lady Selina, beyond her family circle, was trivial, unsympathizing, cold-hearted, supercilious by temperament, never kind but through policy, artificial as clock-work. But in her own home, to her husband, her children, Lady Selina was a very good sort of woman. Devotedly attached to Carr Vipont, exaggerating his talents, thinking him the first man in England, careful of his honor, zealous for his interests, soothing in his cares, tender in his ailments. To her girls prudent and watchful—to her boys indulgent and caressing. Minutely attentive to the education of the first, according to her high-bred ideas of education—and they really were "superior" girls, with much instruction and well-balanced minds. Less authoritative with the last, because boys being not under her immediate control, her sense of responsibility allowed her to display more fondness and less dignity in her intercourse with them than with young ladies who must learn from her example, as well as her precepts, the patrician decorum which becomes the smooth result of impulse restrained and emotion checked. Boys might make a noise in the world, girls should make none. Lady Selina, then, was working the slippers for her absent son, her heart being full of him at that moment. She was describing his character, and expatiating on his promise to two or three attentive listeners, all interested, as being themselves of the Vipont brood, in the probable destiny of the heir to the Carr Viponts.

"In short," said Lady Selina, winding up, "as soon as Reginald is of age we shall get him into Parliament. Carr has always lamented that he himself was not broken into office early; Reginald must be. Nothing so requisite for public men as early training—makes them practical, and not too sensitive to what those horrid newspaper men say. That was Pitt's great advantage. Reginald has ambition; he should have occupation to keep him out of mischief. It is an anxious thing for a mother, when a son is good-looking—such danger of his being spoiled by the women—yes, my dear, it *is* a small foot, very small—his father's foot."

"If Lord Montfort should have no family," said a somewhat distant and subaltern Vipont, whisperingly and hesitating, "does not the title—"

"No, my dear," interrupted Lady Selina; "no, the title does not come to us. It is a melancholy thought, but the marquisate, in that case, is extinct. No other heir-male from Gilbert, the first Marquis. Carr says there is even likely to be some dispute about the earldom. The Barony, of course, is safe; goes with the Irish estates, and most of the English—and goes (don't you know?)—to Sir James Vipont, the last person who ought to have it; the quietest, stupidest creature; not brought up to the sort of thing—a mere gentleman farmer on a small estate in Devonshire."

"He is not here?"

"No. Lord Montfort does not like him. Very natural. Nobody does like his heir, if not his own child, and some people don't even like their own eldest sons! Shocking; but so it is. Montfort is the kindest, most tractable being that ever was, except where he takes a dislike. He dislikes two or three people very much."

"True; how he did dislike poor Mrs. Lyndsay!" said one of the listeners, smiling.

"Mrs. Lyndsay, yes—dear Lady Montfort's mother. I can't say I pitied her, though I was sorry for Lady Montfort. How Mrs. Lyndsay ever took in Montfort for Caroline I can't conceive! How she had the face to think of it! He, a mere youth at the time! Kept secret from all his family—even from his grandmother—the darkest transaction. I don't wonder that he never forgave it."

First Listener. "Caroline has beauty enough to—"

Lady Selina (interrupting). "Beauty, of course—no one can deny *that*. But not at all suited to such a position; not brought up to the sort of thing. Poor Montfort! he should have married a different kind of woman altogether—a woman like his grandmother, the last Lady Montfort. Caroline does nothing for the House—nothing—has not even a child—most unfortunate affair."

Second Listener. "Mrs. Lyndsay was very poor, was not she? Caroline, I suppose, had no opportunity of forming those tastes and habits which are necessary for—for—"

Lady Selina (helping the listener). "For such a position and such a fortune. You are quite right, my dear. People brought up in one way can not accommodate themselves to another; and it is odd, but I have observed that people brought up poor can accommodate themselves less to being very rich than people brought up rich to accommodate themselves to being very poor. As Carr says, in his pointed way, 'it is easier to stoop than to climb.' Yes; Mrs. Lyndsay was, you know, a daughter of Seymour Vipont, who was for so many years in the Administration, with a fair income from his salary, and nothing out of it. She married one of the Scotch Lyndsays—good family, of course—with a very moderate property. She was left a widow young, with an only child, Caroline. Came to town, with a small jointure. The late Lady Montfort was very kind to her. So were we all—took her up—pretty woman—pretty manners—worldly—oh, very! I don't like worldly people. Well, but all of a sudden, a dreadful thing happened. The heir-at-law disputed the jointure, denied that Lyndsay had any right to make settlements on the Scotch property—very complicated business. But, luckily for her, Vipont Crooke's daughter, her cousin and intimate friend, had married Darrell—the famous Darrell—who was then at the bar. It is very useful to have cousins married to clever people. He was interested in her case, took it up. I believe it did not come on in the courts in which Darrell practiced. But he arranged all the evidence, inspected the briefs, spent a great deal of his own money in getting up the case—and, in fact, he gained her cause, though he could not be her counsel. People did say that she was so grateful that after his wife's death she had set her heart on becoming Mrs. Darrell the second. But Darrell was then quite wrapped up in politics—the last man to fall in love—and only looked bored when women fell in love with him, which a good many did. Grand-looking creature, my dear, and quite the rage for a year or two. However, Mrs. Lyndsay all of a sudden went off to Paris, and there Montfort saw Caroline, and was caught. Mrs. Lyndsay, no doubt, calculated on living with her daughter, having the run of Montfort House in town and Montfort Court in the country. But Montfort is deeper than people think for. No, he never forgave her. She was never asked here—took it to heart, went to Rome, and died."

At this moment the door opened, and George Morley, now the Rev. George Morley, entered, just arrived to join his cousins.

Some knew him, some did not. Lady Selina, who made it a point to know all the cousins, rose graciously, put aside the slippers, and gave him two fingers. She was astonished to find him not nearly so shy as he used to be—wonderfully improved; at his ease, cheerful, animated. The man now was in his right place, and following hope on the bent of inclination. Few men are shy when in their right places. He asked after Lady Montfort. She was in her own small sitting-room, writing letters—letters that Carr Vipont had entreated her to write—correspondence useful to the House of Vipont. Before long, however, a servant entered to say that Lady Montfort would be very happy to see Mr. Morley. George followed the servant into that unpretending sitting-room, with its simple chintzes and quiet book-shelves — room that would not have been too fine for a cottage.

CHAPTER X.

In every life, go it fast, go it slow, there are critical pausing places. When the journey is renewed, the face of the country is changed.

How well she suited that simple room—herself so simply dressed—her marvelous beauty so exquisitely subdued. She looked at home there, as if all of home that the house could give were there collected.

She had finished and sealed the momentous letters, and had come, with a sense of relief, from the table at the farther end of the room, on which those letters, ceremonious and conventional, had been written—come to the window, which, though mid-winter, was open, and the red-breast, with whom she had made friends, hopped boldly almost within reach, looking at her with bright eyes, and head curiously aslant. By the window a single chair and a small reading-desk, with the book lying open. The short day was not far from its close, but there was ample light still in the skies, and a serene if chilly stillness in the air without.

Though expecting the relation she had just summoned to her presence, I fear she had half forgotten him. She was standing by the window deep in reverie as he entered, so deep that she started when his voice struck her ear and he stood before her. She recovered herself quickly, however, and said with even more than her ordinary kindliness of tone and manner toward the scholar—"I am so glad to see and congratulate you."

"And I so glad to receive your congratulations," answered the scholar, in smooth, slow voice, without a stutter.

"But, George, how is this?" asked Lady Montfort. "Bring that chair, sit down here, and tell me all about it. You wrote me word you were cured, at least sufficiently to remove your noble scruples. You did not say how. Your uncle tells me by patient will and resolute practice."

"Under good guidance. But I am going to confide to you a secret, if you will promise to keep it."

"Oh, you may trust me; I have no female friends."

The clergyman smiled, and spoke at once of the lessons he had received from the basket-maker.

"I have his permission," he said, in conclusion, "to confide the service he rendered me, the intimacy that has sprung up between us, but to you alone—not a word to your guests. When you have once seen him, you will understand why an eccentric man, who has known better days, would shrink from the impertinent curiosity of idle customers. Contented with his humble livelihood, he asks but liberty and repose."

"That I already comprehend," said Lady Montfort, half sighing, half smiling. "But my curiosity shall not molest him, and when I visit the village, I will pass by his cottage."

"Nay, my dear Lady Montfort, that would be to refuse the favor I am about to ask, which is that you would come with me to that very cottage. It would so please him."

"Please him—why?"

"Because this poor man has a young female grandchild, and he is so anxious that you should see and be kind to her, and because, too, he seems most tenacious to remain in his present residence. The cottage, of course, belongs to Lord Montfort, and is let to him by the bailiff, and if you deign to feel interest in him, his tenure is safe."

Lady Montfort looked down, and colored. She thought, perhaps, how false a security her protection, and how slight an influence her interest would be, but she did not say so. George went on; and so eloquently and so touchingly did he describe both grandsire and grandchild, so skillfully did he intimate the mystery which hung over them, that Lady Montfort became much moved by his narrative, and willingly promised to accompany him across the park to the basket-maker's cottage the first opportunity. But when one has sixty guests in one's house, one has to wait for an opportunity to escape from them unremarked. And the opportunity, in fact, did not come for many days—not till the party broke up—save one or two dowager she-cousins who "gave no trouble," and one or two bachelor he-cousins whom my lord retained to consummate the slaughter of pheasants, and play at billiards in the dreary intervals between sunset and dinner—dinner and bedtime.

Then one cheerful frosty noon George Morley and his fair cousin walked boldly, *en evidence*, before the prying ghostly windows, across the broad gravel-walks—gained the secluded shrubbery, the solitary deeps of parkland—skirted the wide sheet of water—and passing through a private wicket in the paling, suddenly came upon the patch of osier-ground and humble garden, which were backed by the basket-maker's cottage.

As they entered those lowly precincts a child's laugh was borne to their ears—a child's silvery, musical, mirthful laugh; it was long since the great lady had heard a laugh like that—a happy child's natural laugh. She paused and listened with a strange pleasure. "Yes," whispered George Morley, "stop—and hush! there they are."

Waife was seated on the stump of a tree, materials for his handicraft lying beside, neglected. Sophy was standing before him—he, raising his finger as in reproof, and striving hard to frown. As the intruders listened, they overheard that he was striving to teach her the rudiments of French dialogue, and she was laughing merrily at her own blunders and at the solemn affectation of the shocked schoolmaster. Lady Montfort noted with no unnatural surprise the purity of idiom and of accent with which this singular basket-maker was unconsciously displaying his perfect knowledge of a language which the best educated English gentleman of that generation, nay, even of this, rarely speaks with accuracy and elegance. But her attention was diverted immediately from the teacher to the face of the sweet pupil. Women have a quick appreciation of beauty in their own sex—and women, who are themselves beautiful, not the least. Irresistibly Lady Montfort felt attracted toward that innocent countenance, so lively in its mirth, and yet so softly gay. Sir Isaac, who had hitherto lain *perdu*, watching the movements of a thrush amidst a holly-bush, now started up with a bark. Waife rose—Sophy turned half in flight. The visitors approached.

Here, slowly, lingeringly, let fall the curtain. In the frank license of narrative, years will have rolled away ere the curtain rise again. Events that may influence a life often date from moments the most serene, from things that appear as trivial and unnoticeable as the great lady's visit to the basket-maker's cottage. Which of those lives will that visit influence hereafter—the woman's, the child's, the vagrant's? Whose? Probably little that passes now would aid conjecture, or be a visible link in the chain of destiny. A few desultory questions—a few guarded answers—a look or so, a musical syllable or two exchanged between the lady and the child—a basket bought, or a promise to call again. Nothing worth the telling. Be it then untold. View only the scene itself as the curtain drops reluctantly. The rustic cottage, its garden-door open, and open its old-fashioned lattice casements. You can see how neat and cleanly, how eloquent of healthful poverty, how remote from squalid penury, the whitewashed walls, the homely furniture within. Creepers lately trained around the door-way. Christmas holly, with berries red against the window panes; the beehive yonder; a starling, too, outside the threshold, in its wicker cage. In the background (all the rest of the neighboring hamlet out of sight), the church-spire tapering away into the clear blue wintry sky. All has an air of repose—of safety. Close beside you is the Presence of HOME—that ineffable, sheltering, loving Presence — which, amidst solitude, murmurs "not solitary;" a Presence unvouchsafed to the great lady in the palace she has left. And the lady herself? She is resting on the rude gnarled root-stump from which the vagrant had risen; she has drawn Sophy toward her; she has taken the child's hand; she is speaking now — now listening; and on her face kindness looks like happiness. Perhaps she *is* happy at that moment. And Waife? he is turning aside his weather-beaten, mobile countenance, with his hand anxiously trembling upon the young scholar's arm. The scholar whispers, "Are you satisfied with me?" and Waife answers in a voice as low but more broken, "God reward you! Oh, joy!—if my pretty one has found at last a woman friend!" Poor vagabond, he has now a calm asylum—a fixed humble livelihood —more than that, he has just achieved an object fondly cherished. His past life — alas! what has he done with it? His actual life—broken fragment though it be—is at rest now. But still the everlasting question — mocking, terrible question—with its phrasing of farce and its enigmas of tragical sense—"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?" Do with what? The all that remains to him—the all he holds! — the all which man himself, betwixt free-will and predecree is permitted to do. Ask not the vagrant alone—ask each of the four there assembled on that flying bridge called the Moment. Time before thee—what wilt *thou* do with it? Ask thyself!—ask the wisest! Out of effort to answer that question, what dream-schools have risen, never wholly to perish! The science of seers on the Chaldee's Pur-Tor, or in the rock-caves of Delphi, gasped after and grasped at by horn-handed mechanics to-day in their lanes and alleys. To the heart of the populace sink down the blurred relics of what once was the lore of the secretest sages—hieroglyphical tatters which the credulous vulgar attempt to interpret—"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?" Ask Merle and his Crystal! But the curtain descends! Yet a moment, there they are—age and childhood—poverty, wealth, station, vagabondage; the preacher's sacred learning and august ambition; fancies of dawning reason; —hopes of intellect matured; — memories of existence wrecked; household sorrows—untold regrets—elegy and epic in low, close, human sighs, to which Poetry never yet gave voice—all for the moment personified there before you — a glimpse for the guess — no more. Lower and lower falls the curtain! All is blank!

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

Being an Address to the Reader.

SEEING the length to which this Work has already run, and the space it must yet occupy in the columns of Maga, it is but fair to the Reader to correct any inconsiderate notion that the Author does not know "what he will do with it." Learn, then, O friendly reader, that no matter the number of months through which it may glide its way to thine eyes—learn that with the single exception of the chapter now respectfully addressed to thee, THE WHOLE OF THIS WORK HAS BEEN LONG SINCE COMPLETED AND TRANSFERRED FROM THE DESK OF THE AUTHOR TO THE HANDS OF THE PUBLISHER.

On the 22d of January last—let the day be marked with a white stone!—the Author's labors were brought to a close, and "What he will do with it" is no longer a secret—at least to the Editor of Maga.

May this information establish, throughout the rest of the journey to be traveled together, that tacit confidence between Author and Reader which is so important to mutual satisfaction!

Firstly.—The Reader may thus have the complaisance to look at each installment as the component portion of a completed whole; comprehending that it can not be within the scope of the Author's design to aim at a separate effect for each separate Number; but rather to carry on through each Number the effect which he deems most appropriate to his composition when regarded as a whole. And here may it be permitted to dispel an erroneous idea which, to judge by current criticism, appears to be sufficiently prevalent to justify the egotism of comment. It seems to be supposed that, because this work is published from month to month in successive installments, therefore it is written from month to month, as a newspaper article may be dashed off from day to day. Such a supposition is adverse to all the principles by which works that necessitate integrity of plan, and a certain harmony of proportion, are constructed; more especially those works which aim at artistic representations of human life; for, in human life, we must presume that nothing is left to chance, and chance must be no less rigidly banished from the art by which human life is depicted. That art admits no haphazard chapters, no uncertainty as to the consequences that must ensue from the incidents it decides on selecting. Would the artist, on after-thought, alter a consequence, he must reconsider the whole chain-work of incident which led to one inevitable result, and which would be wholly defective if it could be made to lead to another. Hence, a work of this kind can not be written *currente calamo*, from month to month; the entire design must be broadly set forth before the first page goes to press; and large sections of the whole must be always completed in advance, in order to allow time for deliberate forethought, and fair opportunity for such revisions, as an architect, having prepared all his plans, must still admit to his building, should difficulties, not foreseen, sharpen the invention to render each variation in detail an improvement consistent to the original design.

Secondly.—May the Reader—accepting this profession of the principles by which is constructed the history that invites his attention, and receiving now the assurance that the Work is actually passed out of the Author's hands, is as much a thing done and settled as any book composed by him twenty years ago—banish all fear lest each Number should depend for its average merit on accidental circumstances—such as impatient haste, or varying humor, or capricious health, or the demand of more absorbing and practical pursuits, in which, during a considerable portion of the year, it has long been the Author's lot to be actively engaged. Certes, albeit in the course of his life he has got through a reasonable degree of labor, and has habitually relied on application to supply his defects in genius; yet to do one thing at a time is the practical rule of those by whom, in the course of time, many things have been accomplished. And accordingly a work, even so trivial as this may be deemed, is not composed in the turmoil of metropolitan life, nor when other occupations demand attention, but in the quiet leisure of rural shades, and in those portions of the year which fellow-workmen devote to relaxation and amusement. For even in holidays, something of a holiday-task adds a zest to the hours of ease.

Lastly.—Since this survey of our modern world requires a large and a crowded canvas, and would be incomplete did it not intimate those points of contact in which the private touches the public life of Social Man, so it is well that the Reader should fully understand that all reference to such grand events, as political "crises" and changes of Government, were written many months ago, and have no reference whatever to the actual occurrences of the passing day. Holding it, indeed, a golden maxim that practical politics and ideal art should be kept wholly distinct from each other, and seeking in this Narrative to write that which may be read with unembittered and impartial pleasure by all classes and all parties—nay, perchance, in years to come, by the children of those whom he now addresses—the Author deems it indispensable to such ambition to preserve the neutral ground of imaginative creation, not only free from those personal portraitures which are fatal to comprehensive and typical delineations of character, but from all intentional appeals to an interest which can be but momentary, if given to subjects that best befit the leading articles of political journals. His realm, if it hope to endure, is in the conditions, the humors, the passions by which one general phase of society stands forth in the broad light of our

common human nature, never to be cast aside, as obsolete and out of fashion, "into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces."

Reader! this exordium is intended, by way of preface to that more important division of this work, in which the one-half the circle rounds itself slowly on to complete the whole. Forgive the exordium; for, rightly considered, it is but an act of deference to thee. Didst thou ever reflect, O Reader! on what thou art to an Author? Art thou aware of the character of dignity and power with which he invests thee? To thee the Author is but an unit in the great sum of intellectual existence. To the Author, thou, O Reader! art the collective representative of a multifarious abiding audience. To thee the Author is but the machine, more or less defective, that throws off a kind of work usually so ephemeral that seldom wilt thou even pause to examine why it please or displease, for a day, the taste that may change with the morrow. But to him, the Author, thou art, O Reader! a confidant and a friend, often nearer and dearer than any one else in the world. All other friends are mortal as himself; they can but survive for a few years the dust he must yield to the grave. But there, in his eye, aloof and aloft forever, stands the Reader, more and more his friend as Time rolls on. 'Tis to thee that he leaves his grandest human bequest, his memory and his name. If secretly he deem himself not appreciated in his own generation, he hugs the belief, often chimerical and vain, but ever sweet and consoling, that in some generation afar awaits the Reader destined at last to do him justice. With thee, the Author is, of all men, he to whom old age comes the soonest. How quickly thou hastenest to say, "Not what he was! Vigor is waning—invention is flagging—past is his day—push him aside, and make room for the Fresh and the New." But the Author never admits that old age can fall on the Reader. The Reader to him is a being in whom youth is renewed through all cycles. Leaning on his crutch, the Author still walks by the side of that friendly Shadow as he walked on summer eves, with a school-friend of boyhood—talking of the future with artless, hopeful lips! Dreams he that a day may come when he will have no Reader! O school-boy! dost thou ever dream that a day may come when thou wilt have no friend?

CHAPTER II.

Etchings of Hyde Park in the month of June, which, if this History escape those villains the trunk-makers, may be of inestimable value to unborn antiquarians. —Characters, long absent, reappear and give some account of themselves.

Five years have passed away since this History opened. It is the month of June, once more—June, which clothes our London in all its glory; fills its languid ball-rooms with living flowers, and its stony causeways with human butterflies. It is about the hour of 6 P.M. The lounge in Hyde Park is crowded; along the road that skirts the Serpentine crawl the carriages one after the other; congregate, by the rails, the lazy lookers-on—lazy in attitude, but with active eyes, and tongues sharpened on the whetstone of scandal; the Scaligers of Club windows airing their vocabulary in the Park. Slowly saunter on foot-idlers of all degrees in the hierarchy of London *idlesse;* dandies of established fame—youthful tyros in their first season. Yonder, in the Ride, forms less inanimate seem condemned to active exercise; young ladies doing penance in a canter; old beaux at hard labor in a trot. Sometimes, by a more thoughtful brow, a still brisker pace, you recognize a busy member of the Imperial Parliament, who, advised by physicians to be as much on horseback as possible, snatches an hour or so in the interval between the close of his Committee and the interest of the Debate, and shirks the opening speech of a well known bore. Among such truant lawgivers (grief it is to say it) may be seen that once model member, Sir Jasper Stollhead. Grim dyspepsia seizing on him at last, "relaxation from his duties" becomes the adequate punishment for all his sins. Solitary he rides, and, communing with himself, yawns at every second. Upon chairs, beneficently located under the trees toward the north side of the walk, are interspersed small knots and coteries in repose. There, you might see the Ladies Prymme, still the Ladies Prymme—Janet and Wilhelmina; Janet has grown fat, Wilhelmina thin. But thin or fat, they are no less Prymmes. They do not lack male attendants; they are girls of high fashion, with whom young men think it a distinction to be seen talking; of high principle, too, and high pretensions (unhappily for themselves they are coheiresses), by whom young men under the rank of earls need not fear to be artfully entrapped into "honorable intentions." They coquet majestically, but they never flirt; they exact devotion, but they do not ask in each victim a sacrifice on the horns of the altar; they will never give their hands where they do not give their hearts; and being ever afraid that they are courted for their money, they will never give their hearts save to wooers who have much more money than themselves. Many young men stop to do passing homage to the Ladies Prymme; some linger to converse—safe young men, they are all younger sons. Farther on, Lady Frost and Mr. Crampe the wit, sit amicably side by side, pecking at each other with sarcastic beaks; occasionally desisting, to fasten nip and claw upon that common enemy, the passing friend! The Slowes, a numerous family, but taciturn, sit by themselves—bowed to much; accosted rarely.

Note that man of good presence, somewhere about thirty, or a year or two more, who, recognized by most of the loungers, seems not at home in the lounge. He has passed by the various coteries just described, made his obeisance to the Ladies Prymme, received an icy epigram from Lady Frost, and a laconic sneer from Mr. Crampe, and exchanged silent bows with seven silent Slowes. He has wandered on, looking high in the air, but still looking for some one, not in the air, and, evidently disappointed in his search, comes to a full stop at length, takes off his hat, wipes his brow, utters a petulant "Prr—r—pshw!" and seeing, a little in the background, the chairless shade of a thin, emaciated, dusty tree, thither he retires, and seats himself with as little care whether there to seat

himself be the right thing in the right place, as if in the honey-suckle arbor of a village inn. "It serves me right," said he, to himself, "a precocious villain bursts in upon me, breaks my day, makes an appointment to meet here, in these very walks, ten minutes before six; decoys me with the promise of a dinner at Putney—room looking on the river, and fried flounders. I have the credulity to yield; I derange my habits—I leave my cool studio; I put off my easy blouse; I imprison my free-born throat in a cravat invented by the Thugs; the dog-days are at hand, and I walk rashly over scorching pavements in a black frock-coat, and a brimless hat; I annihilate 3*s.* 6*d.* in a pair of kid gloves; I arrive at this haunt of spleen; I run the gauntlet of Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes;—and my traitor fails me! Half past six—not a sign of him! and the dinner at Putney—fried flounders? Dreams! Patience, five minutes more; if then he comes not—breach for life between him and me! Ah, *voilà!* there he comes, the laggard! But how those fine folks are catching at him! Has he asked them also to dinner at Putney, and do *they* care for fried flounders?"

The soliloquist's eye is on a young man, much younger than himself, who is threading the motley crowd with a light quick step, but is compelled to stop at each moment to interchange a word of welcome, a shake of the hand. Evidently he has already a large acquaintance; evidently he is popular, on good terms with the world and himself. What free grace in his bearing! what gay good-humor in his smile! Powers above! Lady Wilhelmina surely blushes as she returns his bow. He has passed Lady Frost unblighted; the Slowes evince emotion, at least the female Slowes, as he shoots by them with that sliding bow. He looks from side to side, with a rapid glance of an eye in which light seems all dance and sparkle; he sees the soliloquist under the meagre tree—the pace quickens, the lips part, half laughing.

"Don't scold, Vance. I am late, I know; but I did not make allowance for interceptions."

"Body o' me, interceptions! For an absentee just arrived in London, you seem to have no lack of friends."

"Friends made in Paris, and found again here at every corner, like pleasant surprises. But no friend so welcome, and dear, as Frank Vance."

"Sensible of the honor, O Lionello the magnificent. Verily you are *bon Prince!* The Houses of Valois and of Medici were always kind to artists. But whither would you lead me? Back into that tread-mill? Thank you, humbly; no. A crowd in fine clothes is of all mobs the dullest. I can look undismayed on the many-headed monster, wild and rampant; but when the many-headed monster buys its hats in Bond Street, and has an eye-glass at each of its inquisitive eyes, I confess I take fright. Besides, it is near seven o'clock; Putney not visible, and the flounders not fried!"

"My cab is waiting yonder; we must walk to it—we can keep on the turf, and avoid the throng. But tell me honestly, Vance, do you really dislike to mix in crowds—you, with your fame, dislike the eyes that turn back to look again, and the lips that respectfully murmur, 'Vance, the Painter?' Ah, I always said you would be a great painter. And in five short years you have soared high."

"Pooh;" answered Vance, indifferently. "Nothing is pure and unadulterated in London use; not cream, nor cayenne pepper—least of all, Fame; mixed up with the most deleterious ingredients. Fame! did you read the *Times'* critique on my pictures in the present Exhibition? Fame, indeed! Change the subject. Nothing so good as flounders. Ho! is that your cab? Superb! Car fit for the 'Grecian youth of talents rare,' in Mr. Enfield's *Speaker;* horse that seems conjured out of the Elgin marbles. Is he quiet?"

"Not very; but trust to my driving. You may well admire the horse—present from Darrell, chosen by Colonel Morley."

When the young men had settled themselves in the vehicle, Lionel dismissed his groom, and, touching his horse, the animal trotted out briskly.

"Frank," said Lionel, shaking his dark curls with a petulant gravity, "Your cynical definitions are unworthy that masculine beard. You despise fame! what sheer affectation!

"Pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat; metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis———."

"Take care," cried Vance; "we shall be over." For Lionel, growing excited, teased the horse with his whip; and the horse bolting, took the cab within an inch of a water-cart.

"Fame, Fame!" cried Lionel, unheeding the interruption. "What would I not give to have and to hold it for an hour!"

"Hold an eel, less slippery; a scorpion, less stinging! But—" added Vance, observing his companion's heightened color. "But," he added seriously, and with an honest compunction, "I forgot, you are a soldier, you follow the career of arms! Never heed what is said on the subject by a querulous painter! The desire of fame may be folly in civilians, in soldiers it is wisdom. Twin-born with the martial sense of honor, it cheers the march, it warms the bivouac; it gives music to the whirr of the bullet, the roar of the ball; it plants hope in the thick of peril; knits rivals with the bond of brothers; comforts the survivor when the brother falls; takes from war its grim aspect of carnage; and from homicide itself extracts lessons that strengthen the safeguards to humanity, and perpetuate life to nations. Right—pant for fame; you are a soldier!"

This was one of those bursts of high sentiment from Vance, which, as they were very rare with him, had the dramatic effect of surprise. Lionel listened to him with a thrilling delight. He could not answer, he was too moved. The artist resumed, as the cabriolet now cleared the Park, and rolled safely and rapidly along the road. "I suppose, during the five years you have spent abroad, completing your general education, you have made little study, or none, of what specially appertains to the profession you have so recently chosen."

"You are mistaken there, my dear Vance. If a man's heart be set on a thing, he is always studying it. The books I loved best, and most pondered over, were such as, if they did not administer lessons, suggested hints that might turn to lessons hereafter. In social intercourse, I never was so pleased as when I could fasten my-

self to some practical veteran — question and cross-examine him. One picks up more ideas in conversation than from books; at least I do. Besides, my idea of a soldier who is to succeed some day, is not that of a mere mechanician at arms. See how accomplished most great captains have been. What observers of mankind! —What diplomatists — what reasoners! what men of action, because men to whom reflection had been habitual before they acted! How many stores of idea must have gone to the judgment which hazards the sortie, or decides on the retreat!"

"Gently, gently!" cried Vance. "We shall be into that omnibus! Give me the whip—do; there—a little more to the left—so. Yes; I am glad to see such enthusiasm in your profession —'tis half the battle. Hazlitt said a capital thing, 'the 'prentice who does not consider the Lord Mayor in his gilt coach the greatest man in the world will live to be hanged!'"

"Pish!" said Lionel, catching at the whip.

Vance (holding it back). "No. I apologize instead. I retract the Lord Mayor; comparisons are odious. I agree with you, nothing like leather—I mean nothing like a really great soldier — Hannibal, and so forth. Cherish that conviction, my boy; meanwhile, respect human life—there is another omnibus!"

The danger past, the artist thought it prudent to divert the conversation into some channel less exciting.

"Mr. Darrell, of course, consents to your choice of a profession?"

"Consents — approves, encourages. Wrote me such a beautiful letter—what a comprehensive intelligence that man has!"

"Necessarily; since he agrees with you. Where is he now?"

"I have no notion; it is some months since I heard from him. He was then at Malta, on his return from Asia Minor."

"So! you have never seen him since he bade you farewell at his old Manor-House?"

"Never. He has not, I believe, been in England."

"Nor in Paris, where you seem to have chiefly resided?"

"Nor in Paris. Ah, Vance, could I but be of some comfort to him! Now that I am older, I think I understand in him much that perplexed me as a boy, when we parted. Darrell is one of those men who require a home. Between the great world and solitude, he needs the intermediate filling up which the life domestic alone supplies: a wife to realize the sweet word helpmate—children, with whose future he could knit his own toils and his ancestral remembrances. That intermediate space annihilated, the great world and the solitude are left, each frowning on the other."

"My dear Lionel, you must have lived with very clever people; you are talking far above your years."

"Am I? True, I have lived, if not with very clever people, with people far above my years. That is a secret I learned from Colonel Morley, to whom I must present you—the subtlest intellect under the quietest manner. Once he said to me, 'Would you throughout life be up to the height of your century—always in the prime of man's reason—without crudeness and without decline—live habitually, while young, with persons older, and, when old, with persons younger than yourself.'"

"Shrewdly said, indeed. I felicitate you on the evident result of the maxim. And so Darrell has no home; no wife, and no children?"

"He has long been a widower; he lost his only son in boyhood, and his daughter—did you never hear?"

"No—what—?"

"Married so ill—a runaway match—and died many years since, without issue."

"Poor man! It was these afflictions, then, that soured his life, and made him the hermit or the wanderer?"

"There," said Lionel, "I am puzzled; for I find that even after his son's death and his daughter's unhappy marriage and estrangement from him, he was still in Parliament, and in full activity of career. But certainly he did not long keep it up. It might have been an effort to which, strong as he is, he felt himself unequal; or, might he have known some fresh disappointment, some new sorrow which the world never guesses? what I have said as to his family afflictions the world knows. But I think he will marry again. That idea seemed strong in his own mind when we parted; he brought it out bluntly, roughly. Colonel Morley is convinced that he will marry, if but for the sake of an heir."

Vance. "And if so, my poor Lionel, you are ousted of—"

Lionel (quickly interrupting). "Hush! Do not say, my dear Vance, do not *you* say—you! —one of those low, mean things which, if said to me even by men for whom I have no esteem, make my ears tingle and my cheek blush. When I think of what Darrell has already done for me—me who have no claim on him—it seems to me as if I must hate the man who insinuates, 'Fear lest your benefactor find a smile at his own hearth, a child of his own blood—for you may be richer at his death in proportion as his life is desolate."

Vance. "You are a fine young fellow, and I beg your pardon. Take care of that milestone —thank you. But I suspect that at least two-thirds of those friendly hands that detained you on the way to me, were stretched out less to Lionel Haughton—a Cornet in the Guards—than to Mr. Darrell's heir-presumptive."

Lionel. "That thought sometimes galls me, but it does me good; for it goads on my desire to make myself some one whom the most worldly would not disdain to know for his own sake. Oh for active service!—Oh for a sharp campaign!—Oh for fair trial how far a man in earnest can grapple Fortune to his breast with his own strong hands! You have done so, Vance; you had but your genius and your painter's brush. I have no genius, but I have resolve, and resolve is perhaps as sure of its ends as genius. Genius and Resolve have three grand elements in common—Patience, Hope, Concentration."

Vance, more and more surprised, looked hard at Lionel, without speaking. Five years of that critical age, from seventeen to twenty-two, spent in the great capital of Europe—kept from its more dangerous vices partly by a proud sense of personal dignity, partly by a temperament

which, regarding love as an ideal for all tender and sublime emotion, recoiled from low profligacy as being to Love what the Yahoo of the mocking satirist was to Man—absorbed much by the brooding ambition that takes youth out of the frivolous present into the serious future, and seeking companionship, not with contemporary idlers, but with the highest and maturest intellects that the free commonwealth of good society brought within his reach—Five years so spent had developed a boy, nursing noble dreams, into a man fit for noble action—retaining freshest youth in its enthusiasm, its elevation of sentiment, its daring, its energy, and divine credulity in its own unexhausted resources; but borrowing from maturity compactness and solidity of idea—the link between speculation and practice—the power to impress on others a sense of the superiority which has been self-elaborated by unconscious culture.

"So!" said Vance, after a prolonged pause, "I don't know whether I have resolve or genius; but, certainly, if I have made my way to some small reputation, patience, hope, and concentration of purpose must have the credit of it; and prudence, too, which you have forgotten to name, and certainly don't evince as a charioteer. I hope, my dear fellow, you are not extravagant. No debts, eh?—why do you laugh?"

"The question is so like you, Frank—thrifty as ever."

"Do you think I could have painted with a calm mind, if I knew that at my door there was a dun whom I could not pay? Art needs serenity; and if an artist begin his career with as few shirts to his back as I had, he must place economy among the rules of perspective."

Lionel laughed again, and made some comments on economy which were certainly, if smart, rather flippant, and tended not only to lower the favorable estimate of his intellectual improvement which Vance had just formed, but seriously disquieted the kindly artist. Vance knew the world—knew the peculiar temptations to which a young man in Lionel's position would be exposed—knew that contempt for economy belongs to that school of Peripatetics which reserves its last lessons for finished disciples in the sacred walks of the Queen's Bench.

However, that was no auspicious moment for didactic warnings.

"Here we are!" cried Lionel—"Putney Bridge."

They reached the little inn by the river-side, and while dinner was getting ready, they hired a boat. Vance took the oars.

VANCE. "Not so pretty here as by those green quiet banks along which we glided, at moonlight, five years ago."

LIONEL. "Ah, no. And that innocent, charming child, whose portrait you took—you have never heard of her since?"

VANCE. "Never! How should I? Have you?"

LIONEL. "Only what Darrell repeated to me. His lawyer had ascertained that she and her grandfather had gone to America. Darrell gently implied that, from what he learned of them, they scarcely merited the interest I felt in their fate. But we were not deceived—were we, Vance?"

VANCE. "No; the little girl—what was her name? Sukey? Sally?—Sophy—true, Sophy—had something about her extremely prepossessing, besides her pretty face; and, in spite of that horrid cotton print, I shall never forget it."

LIONEL. "Her face! Nor I. I see it still before me!"

VANCE. "Her cotton print! I see it still before me! But I must not be ungrateful. Would you believe it, that little portrait, which cost me three pounds, has made, I don't say my fortune, but my fashion?"

LIONEL. "How! You had the heart to sell it?"

VANCE. "No; I kept it as a study for young female heads—'with variations,' as they say in music. It was by my female heads that I became the fashion; every order I have contains the condition—'But be sure, one of your sweet female heads, Mr. Vance.' My female heads are as necessary to my canvas as a white horse to Wouvermans'. Well, that child, who cost me three pounds, is the original of them all. Commencing as a Titania, she has been in turns a 'Psyche,' a 'Beatrice Cenci,' a 'Minna,' 'A Portrait of a Nobleman's Daughter,' 'Burns's Mary in Heaven,' 'The Young Gleaner,' and 'Sabrina fair,' in Milton's *Comus*. I have led that child through all history, sacred and profane. I have painted her in all costumes (her own cotton print excepted). My female heads are my glory—even the *Times*' critic allows *that!* 'Mr. Vance, *there*, is inimitable! a type of child-like grace peculiarly his own, etc., etc.' I'll lend you the article."

LIONEL. "And shall we never again see the original darling Sophy? You will laugh, Vance, but I have been heart-proof against all young ladies. If ever I marry, my wife must have Sophy's eyes! In America!"

VANCE. "Let us hope by this time happily married to a Yankee! Yankees marry girls in their teens, and don't ask for dowries. Married to a Yankee! not a doubt of it! a Yankee who chaws, whittles, and keeps a 'store!'"

LIONEL. "Monster! Hold your tongue! *Apropos* of marriage, why are you still single?"

VANCE. "Because I have no wish to be doubled up! Moreover, man is like a napkin, the more neatly the housewife doubles him, the more carefully she lays him on the shelf. Neither can a man once doubled know how often he may be doubled. Not only his wife folds him in two, but every child quarters him into a new double, till what was a wide and handsome substance, large enough for any thing in reason, dwindles into a pitiful square that will not cover one platter—all puckers and creases—smaller and smaller with every double—with every double a new crease. Then, my friend, comes the washing bill! and, besides all the hurts one receives in the mangle, consider the hourly wear and tear of the linen-press! In short, Shakspeare vindicates the single life, and depicts the double in the famous line—which is no doubt intended to be allegorical of marriage—

'Double, double, toil and trouble.'

Besides, no single man can be fairly called poor. What double man can with certainty be called rich? A single man can lodge in a garret, and dine on a herring; nobody knows, nobody cares.

Let him marry, and he invites the world to witness where he lodges, and how he dines. The first necessary a wife demands is the most ruinous, the most indefinite superfluity; it is Gentility according to what her neighbors call genteel. Gentility commences with the honey-moon; it is its shadow, and lengthens as the moon declines. When the honey is all gone, your bride says, 'We can have our tea without sugar when quite alone, love; but in case Gentility drop in, here's a bill for silver sugar-tongs!' That's why I'm single."

"Economy again, Vance."

"Prudence—dignity," answered Vance, seriously; and sinking into a reverie that seemed gloomy, he shot back to shore.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Vance explains how he came to grind colors and save half-pence.—A sudden announcement.

The meal was over—the table had been spread by a window that looked upon the river. The moon was up; the young men asked for no other lights; conversation between them—often shifting, often pausing—had gradually become grave, as it usually does, with two companions in youth; while yet long vistas in the Future stretch before them deep in shadow, and they fall into confiding talk on what they wish—what they fear; making visionary maps in that limitless Obscure.

"There is so much power in faith," said Lionel, "even when faith is applied but to things human and earthly, that let a man be but firmly persuaded that he is born to do, some day, what at the moment seems impossible, and it is fifty to one but what he does it before he dies. Surely, when you were a child at school, you felt convinced that there was something in your fate distinct from that of the other boys—whom the master might call quite as clever—felt that faith in yourself which made you sure that you would be one day what you are."

"Well, I suppose so; but vague aspirations and self-conceits must be bound together by some practical necessity—perhaps a very homely and a very vulgar one—or they scatter and evaporate. One would think that rich people in high life ought to do more than poor folks in humble life. More pains are taken with their education; they have more leisure for following the bent of their genius; yet it is the poor folks, often half self-educated, and with pinched bellies, that do three-fourths of the world's grand labor. Poverty is the keenest stimulant, and poverty made me not say, 'I *will* do,' but 'I *must*.'"

"You knew real poverty in childhood, Frank?"

"Real poverty, covered over with sham affluence. My father was Genteel Poverty, and my mother was Poor Gentility. The sham affluence went when my father died. The real poverty then came out in all its ugliness. I was taken from a genteel school, at which, long afterward, I genteelly paid the bills; and I had to support my mother somehow or other—somehow or other I succeeded. Alas, I fear not genteelly! But before I lost her, which I did in a few years, she had some comforts which were not appearances; and she kindly allowed, dear soul, that gentility and shams do not go well together. Oh! beware of debt, *Lionello mio;* and never call that economy meanness which is but the safeguard from mean degradation."

"I understand you at last, Vance; shake hands; I know why you are saving."

"Habit now," answered Vance, repressing praise of himself, as usual. "But I remember so well when twopence was a sum to be respected, that to this day I would rather put it by than spend it. All our ideas, like orange-plants, spread out in proportion to the size of the box which imprisons the roots. Then I had a sister." Vance paused a moment as if in pain, but went on with seeming carelessness, leaning over the window-sill, and turning his face from his friend. "I had a sister older than myself, handsome, gentle. I was so proud of her! Foolish girl! my love was not enough for her. Foolish girl! she could not wait to see what I might live to do for her. She married—oh! so genteelly!—a young man, very well born, who had wooed her before my father died. He had the villainy to remain constant when she had not a farthing, and he was dependent on distant relations and his own domains in Parnassus. The wretch was a poet! So they married. They spent their honey-moon genteelly, I dare say. His relations cut him. Parnassus paid no rents. He went abroad. Such heart-rending letters from her! They were destitute. How I worked! how I raged! But how could I maintain her and her husband too, mere child that I was? No matter. They are dead now, both; all dead for whose sake I first ground colors and saved half-pence. And Frank Vance is a stingy, selfish bachelor. Never revive this dull subject again, or I shall borrow a crown from you, and cut you dead. Waiter, ho!—the bill. I'll just go round to the stables, and see the horse put to."

As the friends re-entered London Vance said, "Put me down any where in Piccadilly; I will walk home. You, I suppose, of course, are staying with your mother in Gloucester Place?"

"No," said Lionel, rather embarrassed; "Colonel Morley, who acts for me as if he were my guardian, took a lodging for me in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair. My hours, I fear, would ill suit my dear mother. Only in town two days; and, thanks to Morley, my table is already covered with invitations."

"Yet you gave me one day, generous friend!"

"You the second day—my mother the first. But there are three balls before me to-night. Come home with me, and smoke your cigar while I dress."

"No; but I will at least light my cigar in your hall—prodigal!"

Lionel now stopped at his lodging. The groom, who served him also as valet, was in waiting at the door. "A note for you, Sir, from Colonel Morley—just come." Lionel hastily opened it, and read:

"My dear Haughton,—Mr. Darrell has suddenly arrived in London. Keep yourself free all to-morrow, when, no doubt, he will see you. I am hurrying off to him. Yours in haste, A. V. M."

CHAPTER IV.

Once more Guy Darrell.

Guy Darrell was alone. A lofty room in a large house, on the first floor. His own house in Carlton Gardens, which he had occupied during his brief and brilliant parliamentary career; since then, left contemptuously to the care of a house-agent, to be let by year or by season, it had known various tenants of an opulence and station suitable to its space and site. Dinners and concerts, routes and balls, had assembled the friends and jaded the spirits of many a gracious host and smiling hostess. The tenure of one of these temporary occupants had recently expired, and ere the agent had found another the long-absent owner dropped down into its silenced halls as from the clouds, without other establishment than his old servant Mills and the woman in charge of the house. There, as in a caravanserai, the traveler took his rest, stately and desolate. Nothing so comfortless as one of those large London houses all to one's self. In long rows against the walls stood the empty *fauteuils*. Spectral from the gilded ceiling hung lightless chandeliers. The furniture, pompous, but worn by use and faded by time, seemed mementoes of departed revels. When you return to your own house in the country—no matter how long the absence—no matter how decayed by neglect the friendly chambers may be—if it has only been deserted in the mean while (not let to new races, who, by their own shifting dynasties, have supplanted the rightful lord, and half-effaced his memorials), the walls may still greet you forgivingly, the character of *Home* be still there. You take up again the thread of associations which had been suspended, not snapped. But it is otherwise with a house in cities, especially in our fast-living London, where few houses descend from father to son—where the title-deeds are rarely more than those of a purchased lease for a term of years, after which your property quits you. A house in London, which your father never entered, in which no elbow-chair, no old-fashioned work-table, recalls to you the kind smile of a mother—a house that you have left as you leave an inn, let to people whose names you scarce know, with as little respect for your family records as you have for theirs. When you return after a long interval of years to a house like that, you stand as stood Darrell — a forlorn stranger under your own roof-tree. What cared he for those who had last gathered round those hearths with their chill steely grates—whose forms had reclined on those formal couches—whose feet had worn away the gloss from those costly carpets? Histories in the lives of many might be recorded within those walls. Lovers there had breathed their first vows; bridal feasts had been held; babes had crowed in the arms of proud young mothers; politicians there had been raised into ministers; ministers there had fallen back into "independent members;" through those doors corpses had been borne forth to relentless vaults. For these races and their records what cared the owner? Their writing was not on the walls. Sponged out as from a slate, their reckonings with Time, leaving dim, here and there, some chance scratch of his own, blurred and by-gone. Leaning against the mantle-piece, Darrell gazed round the room with a vague, wistful look, as if seeking to conjure up associations that might link the present hour to that past life which had slipped away elsewhere; and his profile, reflected on the mirror behind, pale and mournful, seemed like that ghost of himself which his memory silently evoked.

The man is but little altered externally since we saw him last, however inly changed since he last stood on those unwelcoming floors; the form still retained the same vigor and symmetry—the same unspeakable dignity of mien and bearing—the same thoughtful bend of the proud neck—so distinct, in its elastic rebound, from the stoop of debility or age. Thick as ever the rich mass of dark brown hair, though, when in the impatience of some painful thought, his hand swept the loose curls from his forehead, the silver threads might now be seen shooting here and there—vanishing almost as soon as seen. No, whatever the baptismal register may say to the contrary, that man is not old—not even elderly; in the deep of that clear gray eye light may be calm, but in calm it is vivid; not a ray sent from brain or from heart, is yet flickering down. On the whole, however, there is less composure than of old in his mien and bearing—less of that resignation which seemed to say, "I have done with the substances of life." Still there was gloom, but it was more broken and restless. Evidently that human breast was again admitting, or forcing itself to court, human hopes, human objects. Returning to the substances of life, their movement was seen in the shadows which, when they wrap us round at remoter distance, seem to lose their trouble as they gain their width. He broke from his musing attitude with an abrupt, angry movement, as if shaking off thoughts which displeased him, and gathering his arms tightly to his breast, in a gesture peculiar to himself, walked to and fro the room, murmuring inaudibly. The door opened; he turned quickly, and with an evident sense of relief, for his face brightened. "Alban, my dear Alban!"

"Darrell—old friend — old school-friend—dear, dear Guy Darrell!" The two Englishmen stood, hands tightly clasped in each other, in true English greeting—their eyes moistening with remembrances that carried them back to boyhood.

Alban was the first to recover self-possession: and when the friends had seated themselves, he surveyed Darrell's countenance deliberately, and said: "So little change!—wonderful! What is your secret?"

"Suspense from life—hybernating. But you beat me; you have been spending life, yet seem as rich in it as when we parted."

"No; I begin to decry the present and laud the past—to read with glasses, to decide from prejudice, to recoil from change, to find sense in twaddle—to know the value of health from the fear to lose it—feel an interest in rheumatism, an awe of bronchitis—to tell anecdotes and to wear flannel. To you in strict confidence I disclose the truth—I am no longer twenty-five. You laugh—this is civilized talk; does it not refresh you after the gibberish you must have chattered in Asia Minor?"

Darrell might have answered in the affirmative with truth. What man, after long years of

solitude, is not refreshed by talk, however trivial, that recalls to him the gay time of the world he remembered in his young day—and recalls it to him on the lips of a friend in youth! But Darrell said nothing; only he settled himself in his chair with a more cheerful ease, and inclined his relaxing brows with a nod of encouragement or assent.

Colonel Morley continued. "But when did you arrive? whence? How long do you stay here? What are your plans?"

Darrell. "Cæsar could not be more laconic. When arrived?—this evening. Whence?—Ouzelford. How long do I stay?—uncertain. What are my plans?—let us discuss them."

Colonel Morley. "With all my heart. You have plans, then?—a good sign. Animals in hybernation form none."

Darrell (Putting aside the lights on the table, so as to leave his face in shade, and looking toward the floor as he speaks). "For the last five years I have struggled hard to renew interest in mankind, reconnect myself with common life and its healthful objects. Between Fawley and London I desired to form a magnetic medium. I took rather a vast one—nearly all the rest of the known world. I have visited both Americas—either Ind. All Asia have I ransacked, and pierced as far into Africa as traveler ever went in search of Timbuctoo. But I have sojourned also, at long intervals—at least they seemed long to me—in the gay capitals of Europe (Paris excepted); mixed, too, with the gayest—hired palaces, filled them with guests—feasted and heard music. 'Guy Darrell,' said I, 'shake off the rust of years—thou hadst no youth while young. Be young now. A holiday may restore thee to wholesome work, as a holiday restores the wearied school-boy.'"

Colonel Morley. "I comprehend; the experiment succeeded?"

Darrell. "I don't know—not yet—but it may; I am here, and I intend to stay. I would not go to a hotel for a single day, lest my resolution should fail me. I have thrown myself into this castle of care without even a garrison. I hope to hold it. Help me to man it. In a word, and without metaphor, I am here with the design of re-entering London life."

Colonel Morley. "I am so glad. Hearty congratulations! How rejoiced all the Viponts will be! Another 'crisis' is at hand. You have seen the newspapers regularly, of course—the state of the country interests you. You say that you come from Ouzelford, the town you once represented. I guess you will re-enter Parliament; you have but to say the word."

Darrell. "Parliament! No. I received, while abroad, so earnest a request from my old constituents to lay the foundation-stone of a new Town-hall, in which they are much interested, and my obligations to them have been so great, that I could not refuse. I wrote to fix the day as soon as I had resolved to return to England, making a condition that I should be spared the infliction of a public dinner, and landed just in time to keep my appointment—reached Ouzelford early this morning, went through the ceremony, made a short speech, came on at once to London, not venturing to diverge to Fawley (which is not very far from Ouzelford), lest, once there again, I should not have strength to leave it—and here I am." Darrell paused, then repeated, in brisk, emphatic tone: "Parliament? No. Labor? No. Fellow-man, I am about to confess to you; I would snatch back some days of youth—a wintry likeness of youth—better than none. Old friend, let us amuse ourselves! When I was working hard—hard—hard—it was you who would say: 'Come forth, be amused'—You happy butterfly that you were! Now, I say to you: 'Show me this flaunting town that you know so well; initiate me into the joy of polite pleasures, social commune—

'Dulce mihi furere est amico.'

You have amusements—let me share them."

"Faith," quoth the Colonel, crossing his legs, "you come late in the day! Amusements cease to amuse at last. I have tried all, and begin to be tired. I have had my holiday, exhausted its sports; and you, coming from books and desk fresh into the playground, say, 'Football and leapfrog.' Alas! my poor friend, why did not you come sooner?"

Darrell. "One word, one question. You have made EASE a philosophy and a system; no man ever did so with more felicitous grace; nor, in following pleasure, have you parted company with conscience and shame. A fine gentleman ever, in honor as in elegance. Well, are you satisfied with your choice of life? Are you happy?"

"Happy—who is? Satisfied—perhaps!"

"Is there any one you envy—whose choice, other than your own, you would prefer?"

"Certainly."

"Who?"

"You."

"I!" said Darrell, opening his eyes with unaffected amaze. "I! envy me! prefer my choice!"

Colonel Morley (peevishly). "Without doubt. You have had gratified ambition—a great career. Envy you! who would not? Your own objects in life fulfilled; you coveted distinction—you won it; fortune—your wealth is immense; the restoration of your name and lineage from obscurity and humiliation—are not name and lineage again written in the *Libro d'oro?* What king would not hail you as his councilor? what senate not open its ranks to admit you as a chief? what house, though the haughtiest in the land, would not accept your alliance? And withal, you stand before me stalwart and unbowed, young blood still in your veins. Ungrateful man! who would not change lots with Guy Darrell? Fame, fortune, health, and, not to flatter you, a form and presence that would be remarked, though you stood in that black frock by the side of a monarch in his coronation robes."

Darrell. "You have turned my questions against myself with a kindliness of intention that makes me forgive your belief in my vanity. Pass on—or rather pass back; you say you have tried all in life that distracts or sweetens. Not so; lone bachelor, you have not tried wedlock. Has not that been your mistake?"

Colonel Morley. "Answer for yourself. You have tried it." The words were scarce out of his mouth ere he repented the retort. For Darrell started as if stung to the quick; and his brow, before serene, his lip, before playful, grew,

the one darkly troubled, the other tightly compressed. "Pardon me," faltered out the friend.

DARRELL. "Oh yes; I brought it on myself. What stuff we have been talking! Tell me the news—not political—any other. But first, your report of young Haughton. Cordial thanks for all your kindness to him. You write me word that he is much improved—most likeable; you add that at Paris he became the rage—that in London you are sure he will be extremely popular. Be it so, if for his own sake. Are you quite sure that it is not for the expectations which I come here to dissipate?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Much for himself, I am certain; a little, perhaps, because, whatever he thinks and I say to the contrary—people seeing no other heir to your property—"

"I understand," interrupted Darrell, quickly. "But he does not nurse those expectations? he will not be disappointed?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Verily I believe that, apart from his love for you, and a delicacy of sentiment that would recoil from planting hopes of wealth in the graves of benefactors, Lionel Haughton would prefer carving his own fortunes to all the ingots hewed out of California by another's hand, and bequeathed by another's will."

"I am heartily glad to hear and to trust you."

"I gather from what you say that you are here with the intention to—to—"

"Marry again," said Darrell, firmly. "Right. I am."

"I always felt sure you would marry again. Is the lady here, too?"

"What lady?"

"The lady you have chosen?"

"Tush—I have chosen none. I come here to choose; and in this I ask advice from your experience. I would marry again! I—at my age! Ridiculous! But so it is. You know all the mothers and marriageable daughters that London—*arida nutrix*—rears for nuptial altars—where, among them, shall I, Guy Darrell, the man whom you think so enviable, find the safe helpmate whose love he may reward with munificent jointure, to whose child he may bequeath the name that has now no successor, and the wealth he has no heart to spend?"

Colonel Morley—who, as we know, is by habit a match-maker, and likes the vocation—assumes a placid but cogitative mien, rubs his brow gently, and says, in his softest, best-bred accents, "You would not marry a mere girl? some one of suitable age? I know several most superior young women on the other side of thirty—Wilhelmina Prymme, for instance, or Janet—"

DARRELL. "Old maids. No—decidedly no!"

COLONEL MORLEY (suspiciously). "But you would not risk the peace of your old age with a girl of eighteen, or else I do know a very accomplished, well-brought-up girl; just eighteen—who—"

DARRELL. "Re-enter life by the side of Eighteen! Am I a madman?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Neither old maids, nor young maids; the choice becomes narrowed. You would prefer a widow. Ha! I have thought of one! a prize, indeed, could you but win her—the widow of—"

DARRELL. "Ephesus! Bah! suggest no widow to me. A widow, with her affections buried in the grave!"

MORLEY. "Not necessarily. And in this case—"

DARRELL (interrupting, and with warmth). "In every case, I tell you, no widow shall doff her weeds for me. Did she love the first man? fickle is the woman who can love twice. Did she not love him? why did she marry him? perhaps she sold herself to a rent-roll? Shall she sell herself again to me, for a jointure? Heaven forbid! Talk not of widows. No dainty so flavorless as a heart warmed up again."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Neither maids, be they old or young, nor widows. Possibly you want an angel. London is not the place for angels."

DARRELL. "I grant that the choice seems involved in perplexity. How can it be otherwise, if one's self is perplexed? And yet, Alban, I am serious; and I do not presume to be so exacting as my words have implied. I ask not fortune, nor rank beyond gentle blood, nor youth, nor beauty, nor accomplishments, nor fashion; but I do ask one thing, and one thing only."

"What is that? you have left nothing worth the having to ask for."

"Nothing! I have left all. I ask some one whom I can love—love better than all the world—not the *mariage de convenance*, not the *mariage de raison*, but the *mariage d'amour*. All other marriage, with vows of love so solemn, with intimacy of commune so close—all other marriage, in my eyes, is an acted falsehood—a varnished sin. Ah! if I had thought so always! But away, regret and repentance! The Future alone is now before me. Alban Morley, I would sign away all I have in the world (save the old house at Fawley), ay, and after signing, cut off, to boot, this right hand, could I but once fall in love; love, and be loved again, as any two of Heaven's simplest human creatures may love each other while life is fresh! Strange, strange—look out into the world; mark the man of our years who shall be most courted, most adulated, or admired. Give him all the attributes of power, wealth, royalty, genius, fame. See all the younger generations bow before him with hope or awe; his word can make their fortune; at his smile a reputation dawns. Well: now let that man say to the young, 'Room among yourselves—all that wins me this homage I would lay at the feet of Beauty. I enter the lists of love,' and straightway his power vanishes, the poorest booby of twenty-four can jostle him aside; before the object of reverence he is now the butt of ridicule. The instant he asks right to win the heart of woman, a boy whom, in all else, he could rule as a lackey, cries, 'Off, Graybeard! *that* realm at least is mine!'"

"This were but eloquent extravagance, even if your beard were gray. Men older than you, and with half your pretensions, even of outward form, have carried away hearts from boys like Adonis. Only choose well; that's the difficulty—if it was not difficult who would be a bachelor!"

"Guide my choice. Pilot me to the haven."

"Accepted! But you must remount a suitable establishment; reopen your way to the great world, and penetrate those sacred recesses where awaiting spinsters weave the fatal web. Leave all to me. Let Mills (I see you have him

still) call on me to-morrow about your *ménage*. You will give dinners, of course?"

"Oh, of course. Must I dine at them myself?"

Morley laughed softly, and took up his hat.

"So soon," cried Darrell. "If I fatigue you already, what chance shall I have with new friends?"

"So soon! it is past eleven. And it is you who must be fatigued."

"No such good luck; were I fatigued, I might hope to sleep. I will walk back with you. Leave me not alone in this room—alone in the jaws of a Fish; swallowed up by a creature whose blood is cold."

"You have something still to say to me," said Alban, when they were in the open air; "I detect it in your manner—what is it?"

"I know not. But you have told me no news; these streets are grown strange to me. Who live now in yonder houses? once the dwellers were my friends."

"In that house—oh, new people; I forget their names—but rich—in a year or two, with luck, they may be exclusives, and forget *my* name. In the other house, Carr Vipont, still."

"Vipont; those dear Viponts! what of them all? crawl they? sting they? Bask they in the sun? or are they in anxious process of a change of skin?"

"Hush, my dear friend; no satire on your own connections; nothing so injudicious. I am a Vipont, too, and all for the family maxim—'Vipont with Vipont, and come what may!'"

"I stand rebuked. But I am no Vipont. I married, it is true, into their house, and they married, ages ago, into mine; but no drop in the blood of time-servers flows through the veins of the last childless Darrell. Pardon. I allow the merit of the Vipont race; no family more excites my respectful interest. What of their births, deaths, and marriages?"

Colonel Morley. "As to births, Carr has just welcomed the birth of a grandson; the first-born of his eldest son (who married last year a daughter of the Duke of Halifax)—a promising young man, a Lord in the Admiralty. Carr has a second son in the —— Hussars; has just purchased his step: the other boys are still at school. He has three daughters too, fine girls, admirably brought up; indeed, now I think of it, the eldest, Honoria, might suit you; highly accomplished—well read, interests herself in politics—a great admirer of intellect—of a very serious turn of mind, too."

Darrell. "A female politician with a serious turn of mind—a farthing rushlight in a London fog! Hasten on to subjects less gloomy. Whose funeral Achievement is that yonder?"

Colonel Morley. "The late Lord Niton's, father to Lady Montfort."

Darrell. "Lady Montfort! Her father was a Lyndsay, and died before the Flood. A deluge, at least, has gone over me and my world since I looked on the face of his widow."

Colonel Morley. "I speak of the present Lord Montfort's wife—the Earl's. You of the poor Marquis's—the last Marquis—the marquisate is extinct. Surely, whatever your wanderings, you must have heard of the death of the last Marquis of Montfort?"

"Yes, I heard of that," answered Darrell, in a somewhat husky and muttered voice. "So he is dead, the young man!—What killed him?"

Colonel Morley. "A violent attack of croup—quite sudden. He was staying at Carr's at the time. I suspect that Carr made him talk! a thing he was not accustomed to do: deranged his system altogether. But don't let us revive painful subjects."

Darrell. "Was she with him at the time?"

Colonel Morley. "Lady Montfort?—No; they were very seldom together."

Darrell. "She is not married again yet?"

Colonel Morley. "No, but still young, and so beautiful, she will have many offers. I know those who are waiting to propose. Montfort has been only dead eighteen months—died just before young Carr's marriage. His widow lives, in complete seclusion, at her jointure-house near Twickenham. She has only seen even me once since her loss."

Darrell. "When was that?"

Morley. "About six or seven months ago; she asked after you with much interest."

Darrell. "After me!"

Colonel Morley. "To be sure. Don't I remember how constantly she and her mother were at your house? Is it strange that she should ask after you? You ought to know her better—the most affectionate, grateful character."

Darrell. "I dare say. But at the time you refer to I was too occupied to acquire much accurate knowledge of a young lady's character. I should have known her mother's character better, yet I mistook even that."

Colonel Morley. "Mrs. Lyndsay's character you might well mistake—charming but artificial: Lady Montfort is natural. Indeed, if you had not that liberal prejudice against widows, she was the very person I was about to suggest to you."

Darrell. "A fashionable beauty, and young enough to be my daughter! Such is human friendship! So the marquisate is extinct, and Sir James Vipont, whom I remember in the House of Commons—respectable man—great authority on cattle—timid, and always saying, '*Did* you read that article in to-day's paper?'—has the estates and the earldom."

Colonel Morley. "Yes. There was some fear of a disputed succession, but Sir James made his claim very clear. Between you and me, the change has been a serious affliction to the Viponts. The late Lord was not wise, but on State occasions he looked his part—*tres Grand Seigneur*—and Carr managed the family influence with admirable tact. The present Lord has the habits of a yeoman; his wife shares his tastes. He has taken the management not only of the property, but of its influence, out of Carr's hands, and will make a sad mess of it, for he is an impracticable, obsolete politician. He will never keep the family together—impossible—a sad thing. I remember how our last muster, five years ago next Christmas, struck terror into Lord ——'s Cabinet; the mere report of it in the newspapers set all people talking and thinking. The result was, that, two weeks after, proper overtures were made to Carr—he consented to assist the Ministers—and the Country was saved! Now, thanks to this stu-

pid new Earl, in eighteen months we have lost ground which it took at least a century and a half to gain. Our votes are divided, our influence frittered away; Montfort House is shut up, and Carr, grown quite thin, says that, in the coming 'CRISIS' a Cabinet will not only be formed, but will also last—last time enough for irreparable mischief—without a single Vipont in office."

Thus Colonel Morley continued in mournful strain, Darrell silent by his side, till the Colonel reached his own door. There, while applying his latch-key to the lock, Alban's mind returned from the perils that threatened the House of Vipont and the Star of Brunswick to the petty claims of private friendship. But even these last were now blended with those grander interests, due care for which every true patriot of the House of Vipont imbibed with his mother's milk.

"Your appearance in town, my dear Darrell, is most opportune. It will be an object with the whole family to make the most of you at this coming 'CRISIS'—I say coming, for I believe it must come. Your name is still freshly remembered — your position greater for having been out of all the scrapes of the party the last sixteen or seventeen years; your house should be the nucleus of new combinations. Don't forget to send Mills to me; I will engage your *chef* and your house-steward to-morrow. I know just the men to suit you. Your intention to marry, too, just at this moment, is most seasonable; it will increase the family interest. I may give out that you intend to marry?"

"Oh, certainly—cry it at Charing Cross."

"A club-room will do as well. I beg ten thousand pardons; but people will talk about money whenever they talk about marriage. I should not like to exaggerate your fortune—I know it must be very large, and all at your own disposal—eh?"

"Every shilling."

"You must have saved a great deal since you retired into private life?"

"Take that for granted. Dick Fairthorn receives my rents, and looks to my various investments; and I take him as my indisputable authority when I say that, what with the rental of lands I purchased in my poor boy's lifetime, and the interest on my much more lucrative money-ed capital, you may safely whisper to all ladies likely to feel interest in that diffusion of knowledge, 'Thirty-five thousand a year, and an old fool.'"

"I certainly shall not say an old fool, for I am the same age as yourself; and if I had £35,000 a year I would marry too."

"You would! Old fool!" said Darrell, turning away.

CHAPTER V.

Revealing glimpses of Guy Darrell's past in his envied prime. Dig but deep enough, and under all earth runs water, under all life runs grief.

ALONE in the streets, the vivacity which had characterized Darrell's countenance as well as his words, while with his old school friend, changed as suddenly and as completely into pensive abstracted gloom as if he had been acting a part, and with the exit the acting ceased. Disinclined to return yet to the solitude of his home, he walked on, at first mechanically, in the restless desire of movement, he cared not whither. But, as thus chance-led, he found himself in the centre of that long straight thoroughfare which connects what once were the separate villages of Tyburn and Holborn, something in the desultory links of reverie suggested an object to his devious feet. He had but to follow that street to his right hand to gain, in a quarter of an hour, a sight of the humble dwelling-house in which he had first settled down, after his early marriage, to the arid labors of the bar. How ould go, now that, wealthy and renowned, he was revisiting the long deserted focus of English energies, and contemplate the obscure abode in which his powers had been first concentred on the pursuit of renown and wealth. Who among my readers that may have risen on the glittering steep ("Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb?"*) has not been similarly attracted toward the roof, at the craggy foot of the ascent, under which golden dreams refreshed his straining sinews? Somewhat quickening his steps, now that a bourne was assigned to them, the man growing old in years, but, unhappily for himself, too tenacious of youth in its grand discontent, and keen susceptibilities to pain, strode noiselessly on, under the gaslights, under the stars; gaslights primly marshaled at equidistance; stars that seem, to the naked eye, dotted over space without symmetry or method—Man's order, near and finite, is so distinct; the Maker's order, remote, infinite, is so beyond Man's comprehension even of *what* is order!

Darrell paused, hesitating. He had now gained a spot in which improvement had altered the landmarks. The superb broad thoroughfare continued where once it had vanished abrupt in a labyrinth of courts and alleys. But the way was not hard to find. He turned a little toward the left, recognizing, with admiring interest, in the gay white would-be Grecian edifice, with its French *grille*, bronzed, gilded, the transformed Museum, in the still libraries of which he had sometimes snatched a brief and ghostly respite from books of law. Onward yet through lifeless Bloomsbury, not so far toward the last bounds of Atlas as the desolation of Podden Place, but the solitude deepening as he passed. There it is, a quiet street indeed! not a soul on its gloomy pavements—not even a policeman's soul. Naught stirring save a stealthy, profligate, good-for-nothing cat, flitting fine through yon area bars. Down that street had he come, I trow, with a livelier, quicker step the day when, by the strange good luck which had uniformly attended his worldly career of honors, he had been suddenly called upon to supply the place of an absent senior, and, in almost his earliest brief, the Courts of Westminster had recognized a master; come, I trow, with a livelier step, knocked at that very door whereat he is halting now; entered the room where the young wife sat, and at sight of her querulous peevish face, and at sound of her unsympathizing languid voice, fled into his cupboard-like back-parlor—and mutter-

* "Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?"
BEATTIE.

ed "courage"—courage to endure the home he had entered longing for a voice which should invite and respond to a cry of joy.

How closed up, dumb, and blind, looked the small mean house, with its small mean door, its small mean rayless windows. Yet a FAME had been born there! Who are the residents now? Buried in slumber, have *they* any "golden dreams?" Works therein any struggling brain, to which the prosperous man might whisper "courage;" or beats, there, any troubled heart to which faithful woman should murmur "joy?" Who knows? London is a wondrous poem, but each page of it is written in a different language; no lexicon yet composed for any.

Back through the street, under the gaslights, under the stars went Guy Darrell, more slow and more thoughtful. Did the comparison between what he had been, what he was, the mean home just revisited, the stately home to which he would return, suggest thoughts of natural pride? it would not seem so; no pride in those close-shut lips, in that melancholy stoop.

He came into a quiet square—still Bloomsbury—and right before him was a large respectable mansion, almost as large as that one in courtlier quarters, to which he loiteringly delayed the lone return. There, too, had been, for a time, the dwelling which was called his *home*—there, when gold was rolling in like a tide, distinction won, position assured, there—not yet in Parliament, but foremost at the bar—already pressed by constituencies, already wooed by ministers—there, still young (oh, luckiest of lawyers!)—there had he moved his household gods. Fit residence for a Prince of the Gown. Is it when living there that you would envy the prosperous man? Yes, the moment his step *quits* that door; but envy him when he enters its threshold?—nay, envy rather that roofless Savoyard who has crept under yonder portico, asleep with his ragged arm round the cage of his stupid dormice! There, in that great barren drawing-room, sits a

"Pale and elegant Aspasia."

Well, but the wife's face is not querulous now. Look again—anxious, fearful, secret, sly. Oh, that fine lady, a Vipont Crooke, is not contented to be wife to the wealthy, great Mr. Darrell. What wants she? that *he* should be spouse to the fashionable fine Mrs. Darrell? Pride in him! not a jot of it; such pride were unchristian. Were he proud of her, as a Christian husband ought to be of so elegant a wife, would he still be in Bloomsbury? Envy *him!* the high gentleman, so true to his blood, all galled and blistered by the moral vulgarities of a tuft-hunting, toad-eating mimic of the Lady Selinas. Envy him! well, why not? All women have their foibles. Wise husbands must bear and forbear. Is that all? wherefore, then, is her aspect so furtive, wherefore on his a wild, vigilant sternness? Tut, what so brings into coveted fashion a fair lady exiled to Bloomsbury as the marked adoration of a lord, not her own, who gives law to St. James's! Untempted by passion, cold as ice to affection, if thawed to the gush of a sentiment, secretly preferring the husband she chose, wooed, and won, to idlers less gifted even in outward attractions; all this, yet seeking, coquetting for, the *éclat* of dishonor! To elope! Oh, no, too wary for that, but to be gazed at and talked of, as the fair Mrs. Darrell, to whom the Lovelace of London was so fondly devoted. Walk in, haughty son of the Dare-all, Darest thou ask who has just left thy house? Darest thou ask what and whence is the note that sly hand has secreted? Darest thou?—perhaps yes: what then? canst thou lock up thy wife? canst thou poniard the Lovelace? Lock up the air; poniard all whose light word in St. James's can bring into fashion the matron of Bloomsbury! Go, lawyer, go, study briefs, and be parchment.

Agonies—agonies—shot again through Guy Darrell's breast, as he looked on that large, most respectable house, and remembered his hourly campaign against disgrace! He has triumphed. Death fights for him: on the very brink of the last scandal, a cold, caught at some Vipont's ball, became fever; and so from that door the Black Horses bore away the Bloomsbury Dame. ere she was yet — the fashion! Happy in grief the widower who may, with confiding hand, ransack the lost wife's harmless desk, sure that no thought concealed from him in life will rise accusing from the treasured papers! But that pale, proud mourner, hurrying the eye over sweet-scented *billets*, compelled, in very justice to the dead, to convince himself that the mother of his children was corrupt only at heart—that the Black Horses had come to the door in time — and, wretchedly consoled by that niggardly conviction, flinging into the flames the last flimsy tatters on which his honor (rock-like in his own keeping) had been fluttering to and fro in the charge of a vain, treacherous fool! Envy you *that* mourner? No! not even in his release. Memory is not nailed down in the velvet coffin; and to great loyal natures, less bitter is the memory of the lost when hallowed by tender sadness, than when coupled with scorn and shame.

The wife is dead. Dead, too, long years ago, the Lothario! The world has forgotten them; they fade out of this very record when ye turn the page; no influence, no bearing have they on such future events as may mark what yet rests of life to Guy Darrell. But as he there stands and gazes into space, the two forms are before his eye as distinct as if living still. Slowly, slowly he gazes them down; the false smiles flicker away from their feeble lineaments; woe and terror on their aspects — they sink, they shrivel, they dissolve!

CHAPTER VI.

The wreck cast back from Charybdis.

Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle.

GUY DARRELL turned hurriedly from the large house in the great square, and, more and more absorbed in reverie, he wandered out of his direct way homeward, clear and broad though it was, and did not rouse himself till he felt, as it were, that the air had grown darker; and looking vaguely round, he saw that he had strayed into a dim maze of lanes and passages. He paused under one of the rare lamp-posts, gathering up his recollections of the London he had so long quitted, and doubtful for a moment or two which turn to take. Just then, up from an

alley fronting him at right angles, came sullenly, warily, a tall, sinewy, ill-boding tatterdemalion figure, and seeing Darrell's face under the lamp, halted abrupt at the mouth of the narrow passage from which it had emerged — a dark form filling up the dark aperture. Does that ragged wayfarer recognize a foe by the imperfect ray of the lamplight? or is he a mere vulgar footpad, who is doubting whether he should spring upon a prey? Hostile his look—his gesture—the sudden cowering down of the strong frame, as if for a bound; but still he is irresolute. What awes him? What awes the tiger, who would obey his blood-instinct without fear, in his rush on the Negro—the Hindoo—but who halts and hesitates at sight of the white man—the lordly son of Europe? Darrell's eye was turned toward the dark passage — toward the dark figure—carelessly, neither recognizing, nor fearing, nor defying—carelessly, as at any harmless object in crowded streets, and at broad day. But while that eye was on him, the tatterdemalion halted; and, indeed, whatever his hostility, or whatever his daring, the sight of Darrell took him by so sudden a surprise, that he could not at once re-collect his thoughts, and determine how to approach the quiet, unconscious man who, in reach of his spring, fronted his overwhelming physical strength with the habitual air of dignified command. His first impulse was that of violence; his second impulse curbed the first. But Darrell now turns quickly, and walks straight on; the figure quits the mouth of the passage, and follows with a long and noiseless stride. It has nearly gained Darrell. With what intent? A fierce one, perhaps — for the man's face is sinister, and his state evidently desperate—when there emerges unexpectedly from an ugly-looking court or *cul de sac*, just between Darrell and his pursuer, a slim, long-backed, buttoned-up, weasel-faced policeman. The policeman eyes the tatterdemalion instinctively, then turns his glance toward the solitary, defenseless gentleman in advance, and walks on, keeping himself between the two. The tatterdemalion stifles an impatient curse. Be his purpose force, be it only supplication, be it colloquy of any kind, impossible to fulfill it while that policeman is there. True, that in his powerful hands he could have clutched that slim, long-backed officer, and broken him in two as a willow wand. But that officer is the Personation of Law, and can stalk through a legion of tatterdemalions as a ferret may glide through a barn full of rats. The prowler feels he is suspected. Unknown as yet to the London police, he has no desire to invite their scrutiny. He crosses the way; he falls back; he follows from afar. The policeman may yet turn away before the safer streets of the metropolis be gained. No; the cursed Incarnation of Law, with eyes in its slim back, continues its slow stride at the heels of the unsuspicious Darrell. The more solitary defiles are already passed—now that dim lane, with its dead wall on one side. By the dead wall skulks the prowler; on the other side still walks The Law. Now — alas for the prowler!—shine out the thoroughfares, no longer dim nor deserted —Leicester Square, the Haymarket, Pall Mall, Carlton Gardens; Darrell is at his door. The policeman turns sharply round. There, at the corner near the learned Club-house, halts the tatterdemalion. Toward the tatterdemalion the policeman now advances quickly. The tatterdemalion is quicker still — fled like a guilty thought.

Back—back—back into that maze of passages and courts—back to the mouth of that black alley. There he halts again. Look at him. He has arrived in London but that very night, after an absence of more than four years. He has arrived from the sea-side on foot; see, his shoes are worn into holes. He has not yet found a shelter for the night. He had been directed toward that quarter, thronged with adventurers, native and foreign, for a shelter, safe, if squalid. It is somewhere near that court, at the mouth of which he stands. He looks round, the policeman is baffled, the coast clear. He steals forth, and pauses under the same gaslight as that under which Guy Darrell had paused before—under the same gaslight, under the same stars. From some recess in his rags he draws forth a large, distained, distended pocket-book — last relic of sprucer days — leather of dainty morocco, once elaborately tooled, patent springs, fairy lock, fit receptacle for bank-notes, *billets-doux*, memoranda of debts of honor, or pleasurable engagements. Now how worn, tarnished, greasy, rapscallion-like, the costly bauble! Filled with what motley, unlovable contents—stale pawn-tickets of foreign *monts de piété*, pledges never henceforth to be redeemed; scrawls by villainous hands in thievish hieroglyphics; ugly implements replacing the malachite penknife, the golden tooth-pick, the jeweled pencil-case, once so neatly set within their satin lappets. Ugly implements, indeed—a file, a gimlet, loaded dice. Pell-mell, with such more hideous and recent contents, dishonored evidences of gaudier summer life—locks of ladies' hair, love-notes treasured mechanically, not from amorous sentiment, but perhaps from some vague idea that they might be of use if those who gave the locks or wrote the notes should be raised in fortune, and could buy back the memorials of shame. Diving amidst these miscellaneous documents and treasures, the prowler's hand rested on some old letters in clerk-like fair caligraphy, tied round with a dirty string, and on them, in another and fresher writing, a scrap that contained an address—"Samuel Adolphus Poole, Esq., Alhambra Villa, Regent's Park." "To-morrow, Nix my Dolly; to-morrow," muttered the tatterdemalion; "but to-night—plague on it, where is the other blackguard's direction? Ah, here—" And he extracted from the thievish scrawls a *peculiarly* thievish-looking hieroglyph. Now, as he lifts it up to read by the gaslight, survey him well. Do you not know him? Is it possible? What! the brilliant sharper! The ruffian exquisite! Jasper Losely! Can it be? Once before, in the fields of Fawley, we beheld him out of elbows, seedy, shabby, ragged. But then it was the decay of a foppish spendthrift — clothes distained, ill-assorted, yet still of fine cloth; shoes in holes, yet still pearl-colored brodequins. But now it is the decay of no foppish spendthrift; the rags are not of fine cloth; the tattered shoes are not brodequins. The man has fallen far below the polifer grades of knavery, in which the sharper affects the beau. And the countenance, as we last saw it,

if it had lost much of its earlier beauty, was still incontestably handsome. What with vigor, and health, and animal spirits, *then* on the aspect still lingered light; *now*, from corruption, the light itself was gone. In that Herculean constitution excess of all kinds had at length forced its ravage, and the ravage was visible in the ruined face. The once sparkling eye was dull and bloodshot. The colors of the cheek, once clear and vivid, to which fiery drink had only sent the blood in a warmer glow, were now of a leaden dullness, relieved but by broken streaks of angry red—like gleams of flame struggling through gathered smoke. The profile, once sharp and delicate like Apollo's, was now confused in its swollen outline; a few years more, and it would be gross as that of Silenus—the nostrils, distended with incipient carbuncles, which betray the gnawing fang that alcohol fastens into the liver. Evil passions had destroyed the outline of the once beautiful lips, arched as a Cupid's bow. The sideling, lowering, villainous expression which had formerly been but occasional, was now habitual and heightened. It was the look of the bison before it gores. It is true, however, that even yet on the countenance there lingered the trace of that lavish favor bestowed on it by nature. An artist would still have said, "How handsome that ruggamuffin must have been!" And true is it, also, that there was yet that about the bearing of the man which contrasted his squalor, and seemed to say that he had not been born to wear rags, and loiter at midnight among the haunts of thieves. Nay, I am not sure that you would have been as incredulous now, if told that the wild outlaw before you had some claim by birth or by nurture to the rank of gentleman, as you would had you seen the gay spendthrift in his gaudy day. For then he seemed below, and now he seemed above, the grade in which he took place. And all this made his aspect yet more sinister, and the impression that he was dangerous yet more profound. Muscular strength often remains to a powerful frame long after the constitution is undermined, and Jasper's Losely's frame was still that of a formidable athlete; nay, its strength was yet more apparent now that the shoulders and limbs had increased in bulk, than when it was half-disguised in the lissom symmetry of exquisite proportion—less active, less supple, less capable of endurance, but with more crushing weight in its rush or its blow. It was the figure in which brute force seems so to predominate that in a savage state it would have worn a crown—the figure which secures command and authority in all societies where force alone gives the law. Thus, under the gaslight and under the stars, stood the terrible animal—a strong man imbruted—"SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE." There, still uneffaced, though the gold-threads are all tarnished and ragged, are the ominous words on the silk of the she-devil's love-token! But Jasper has now inspected the direction on the paper he held to the lamplight, and, satisfying himself that he was in the right quarter, restored the paper to the bulky, distended pocket-book, and walked sullenly on toward the court from which had emerged the policeman who had crossed his prowling chase.

"It is the most infernal shame," said Losely, between his grinded teeth, "that I should be driven to these wretched dens for a lodging, while that man who ought to feel bound to maintain me should be rolling in wealth, and cottoned up in a palace. But he shall fork out. Sophy must be hunted up. I will clothe her in rags like these. She shall sit at his street-door. I will shame the miserly hunks. But how track the girl? Have I no other hold over him? Can I send Dolly Poole to him? How addled my brains are!—want of food—want of sleep. Is this the place? Peuh!"

Thus murmuring he now reached the arch of the court, and was swallowed up in its gloom. A few strides, and he came into a square open space, only lighted by the skies. A house, larger than the rest, which were of the meanest order, stood somewhat back, occupying nearly one side of the quadrangle—old, dingy, dilapidated. At the door of this house stood another man, applying his latch-key to the lock. As Losely approached, the man turned quickly, half in fear, half in menace—a small, very thin, impish-looking man, with peculiarly restless features that seemed trying to run away from his face. Thin as he was, he looked all skin and no bones—a goblin of a man whom it would not astonish you to hear could creep through a keyhole. Seeming still more shadowy and impalpable by his slight, thin, sable dress, not of cloth, but a sort of stuff like alpaca. Nor was that dress ragged, nor, as seen but in starlight, did it look worn or shabby; still you had but to glance at the creature to feel that it was a child in the same Family of Night as the ragged felon that towered by its side. The two outlaws stared at each other. "Cutts!" said Losely, in the old rollicking voice, but in a hoarser, rougher key—"Cutts, my boy, here I am, welcome me!"

"What! General Jas.!" returned Cutts, in a tone which was not without a certain respectful awe, and then proceeded to pour out a series of questions in a mysterious language, which may be thus translated and abridged: "How long have you been in England? how has it fared with you? you seem very badly off? coming here to hide? nothing very bad, I hope? what is it?"

Jasper answered in the same language, though with less practiced mastery of it—and with that constitutional levity which, whatever the time or circumstance, occasionally gave a strange sort of wit, or queer, uncanny, devil-me-care vein of drollery, to his modes of expression.

"Three months of the worst luck man ever had—a row with the *gens-d'armes*—long story—three of our pals seized—affair of the galleys for them, I suspect—French frogs can't seize me—fricasseed one or two of them—broke away—crossed the country—reached the coast—found an honest smuggler—landed off Sussex with a few other kegs of brandy—remembered you—preserved the address you gave me—and condescend to this rat-hole for a night or so. Let me in—knock up somebody—break open the larder—I want to eat—I am famished—I should have eaten you by this time, only there's nothing on your bones."

The little man opened the door—a passage black as Erebus. "Give me your hand, General." Jasper was led through the pitchy gloom for a few yards; then the guide found a gas-cock, and the place broke suddenly into light.

A dirty narrow stair-case on one side; facing it, a sort of lobby, in which an open door showed a long, sanded parlor, like that in public-houses—several tables, benches, the walls whitewashed, but adorned with sundry ingenious designs made by charcoal or the smoked ends of clay-pipes. A strong smell of stale tobacco and of gin and rum. Another gaslight, swinging from the centre of the ceiling, sprang into light as Cutts touched the tap-cock.

"Wait here," said the guide. "I will go and get you some supper."

"And some brandy," said Jasper.

"Of course."

The bravo threw himself at length on one of the tables, and, closing his eyes, moaned. His vast strength had become acquainted with physical pain. In its stout knots and fibres, aches and sharp twinges, the dragon-teeth of which had been sown years ago in revels or brawls, which then seemed to bring but innocuous joy and easy triumph, now began to gnaw and grind. But when Cutts reappeared with coarse viands and the brandy-bottle, Jasper shook off the sense of pain, as does a wounded wild beast that can still devour; and after regaling fast and ravenously, he emptied half the bottle at a draught, and felt himself restored and fresh.

"Shall you fling yourself among the swell fellows who hold their club here, General?" asked Cutts; "'tis a bad trade, every year it gets worse. Or have you not some higher game in your eye?"

"I have higher game in my eye. One bird I marked down this very night. But that may be slow work, and uncertain. I have in this pocket-book a bank to draw upon meanwhile."

"How?—forged French *billets de banque*—dangerous."

"Pooh! better than that; letters which prove theft against a respectable rich man."

"Ah, you expect hush-money?"

"Exactly so. I have good friends in London."

"Among them, I suppose, that affectionate 'adopted mother' who would have kept you in such order."

"Thousand thunders! I hope not. I am not a superstitious man, but I fear that woman as if she were a witch, and I believe she is one. You remember black Jean, whom we called *Sans culotte*. He would have filled a church-yard with his own brats for a five-franc piece; but he would not have crossed a church-yard alone at night for a thousand Naps. Well, that woman to me is what a church-yard was to black Jean. No; if she is in London, I have but to go to her house and say, 'Food, shelter, money;' and I would rather ask Jack Ketch for a rope."

"How do you account for it, General? She does not beat you—she is not your wife. I have seen many a stout fellow, who would stand fire without blinking, show the white feather at a scold's tongue. But then he must be spliced to her—"

"Cutts, that griffin does not scold—she preaches. She wants to make me spooney, Cutts—she talks of my young days, Cutts—she wants to blight me into what she calls an honest man, Cutts;—the virtuous dodge! She snubs and cows me, and frightens me out of my wits, Cutts. For I do believe that the witch is determined to have me, body and soul, and to marry me some day in spite of myself, Cutts. And if ever you see me about to be clutched in those horrible paws, poison me with ratsbane, or knock me on the head, Cutts."

The little man laughed a little laugh, sharp and eldritch, at the strange cowardice of the stalwart dare-devil. But Jasper did not echo the laugh.

"Hush!" he said, timidly, "and let me have a bed, if you can; I have not slept in one for a week, and my nerves are shaky."

The imp lighted a candle-end at the gas-lamp, and conducted Losely up the stairs to his own sleeping-room, which was less comfortless than might be supposed. He resigned his bed to the wanderer, who flung himself on it, rags and all. But sleep was no more at his command than it is at a king's.

"Why the —— did you talk of that witch?" he cried, peevishly, to Cutts, who was composing himself to rest on the floor. "I swear I fancy I feel her sitting on my chest like a nightmare."

He turned with a vehemence which shook the walls, and wrapped the coverlid round him, plunging his head into its folds. Strange though it seem to the novice in human nature—to Jasper Losely the woman who had so long lived but for one object—viz., to save him from the gibbet, was as his evil genius, his haunting fiend. He had conceived a profound terror of her, from the moment he perceived that she was resolutely bent upon making him honest. He had broken from her years ago—fled—resumed his evil courses—hid himself from her—in vain. Wherever he went, there went she. He might baffle the police, not her. Hunger had often forced him to accept her aid. As soon as he received it, he hid from her again, burying himself deeper and deeper in the mud, like a persecuted tench. He associated her idea with all the ill-luck that had befallen him. Several times some villainous scheme on which he had counted to make his fortune had been baffled in the most mysterious way; and just when baffled—and there seemed no choice but to cut his own throat or some one else's—up turned grim Arabella Crane, in the iron-gray gown, and with the iron-gray ringlets—hatefully, awfully beneficent—offering food, shelter, gold—and some demoniacal, honorable work. Often had he been in imminent peril from watchful law or treacherous accomplice. She had warned and saved him as she had saved him from the fell Gabrielle Desmarets, who, unable to bear the sentence of penal servitude, after a long process defended with astonishing skill, and enlisting the romantic sympathies of young France, had contrived to escape into another world by means of a subtle poison concealed about her *distinguée* person, and which she had prepared years ago with her own bloodless hands, and no doubt scientifically tested its effect on others. The cobra capella is gone at last! "*Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle*," O Jasper Losely! But why Arabella Crane should thus continue to watch over him whom she no longer professed to love—how she should thus have acquired the gift of ubiquity and the power to save him—Jasper Losely could not conjecture. The whole thing seemed to him weird and supernatural. Most truly did he say that she had *cowed him*. He had often longed to strangle

her; when absent from her, had often resolved upon that act of gratitude. The moment he came in sight of her stern, haggard face—her piercing lurid eyes—the moment he heard her slow, dry voice in some such sentences as these, "Again you come to me in your trouble, and ever shall. Am I not still as your mother, but with a wife's fidelity, till death us do part. There is the portrait of what you were—look at it, Jasper. Now turn to the glass—see what you are. Think of the fate of Gabrielle Desmarets! But for me what, long since, had been your own? But I will save you—I have sworn it. You shall be wax in these hands at last;" the moment that voice thus claimed and insisted on redeeming him, the ruffian felt a cold shudder—his courage oozed—he could no more have nerved his arm against her than a Thug would have lifted his against the dire goddess of his murderous superstition. Jasper could not resist a belief that the life of this dreadful protectress was, somehow or other, made essential to his—that, were she to die, he should perish in some ghastly and preternatural expiation. But for the last few months he had, at length, escaped from her—diving so low, so deep into the mud, that even her net could not mesh him. Hence, perhaps, the imminence of the perils from which he had so narrowly escaped—hence the utterness of his present destitution. But man, however vile, whatever his peril, whatever his destitution, was born free, and loves liberty. Liberty to go to Satan in his own way was to Jasper Losely a supreme blessing compared to that benignant compassionate *espionage*, with its relentless eye and restraining hand. Alas and alas! deem not this perversity unnatural in that headstrong self-destroyer! How many are there whom not a grim hard-featured Arabella Crane, but the long-suffering, divine, omniscient, gentle Providence itself, seeks to warn, to aid, to save—and is shunned, and loathed, and fled from, as if it were an evil genius! How many are there who fear nothing so much as the being made good in spite of themselves?—how many?—who can count them?

CHAPTER VII.

The public man needs but one patron—viz., THE LUCKY MOMENT.

"At his house in Carlton Gardens, Guy Darrell, Esq., for the season."

Simple insertion in the pompous list of Fashionable Arrivals!—the name of a plain commoner imbedded in the amber which glitters with so many coronets and stars! Yet such is England, with all its veneration for titles, that the eyes of the public passed indifferently over the rest of that chronicle of illustrious "whereabouts," to rest with interest, curiosity, speculation, on the unemblazoned name which but a day before had seemed slipped out of date—obsolete as that of an actor who figures no more in play-bills. Unquestionably the sensation excited was due, in much, to the "ambiguous voices" which Colonel Morley had disseminated throughout the genial atmosphere of Club-rooms. "Arrived in London for the season!" he, the orator, once so famous, long so forgotten, who had been out of the London world for the space of more than half a generation. "Why now? why for the season?" quoth the Colonel. "He is still in the prime of life as a public man, and—a CRISIS is at hand!"

But that which gave weight and significance to Alban Morley's hints, was the report in the newspapers of Guy Darrell's visit to his old constituents, and of the short speech he had addressed to them, to which he had so slightly referred in his conversation with Alban. True, the speech *was* short: true, it touched but little on passing topics of political interest—rather alluding, with modesty and terseness, to the contests and victories of a former day. But still, in the few words there was the swell of the old clarion—the wind of the Paladin's horn which woke Fontarabian echoes.

It is astonishing how capricious, how sudden are the changes in value of a public man. All depends upon whether the public want, or believe they want, the man; and that is a question upon which the public do not know their own minds a week before; nor do they always keep in the same mind, when made up, for a week together. If they do not want a man—if he do not hit the taste, nor respond to the exigency of the time—whatever his eloquence, his abilities, his virtues, they push him aside, or cry him down. Is he wanted?—does the mirror of the moment reflect his image?—that mirror is an intense magnifier; his proportions swell—they become gigantic. At that moment the public wanted some man; and the instant the hint was given, "Why not Guy Darrell?" Guy Darrell was seized upon as *the* man wanted. It was one of those times in our Parliamentary history when the public are out of temper with all parties—when recognized leaders have contrived to damage themselves—when a Cabinet is shaking, and the public neither care to destroy nor to keep it; a time, too, when the country seemed in some danger, and when, mere men of business held unequal to the emergency, whatever name suggested associations of vigor, eloquence, genius, rose to a premium above its market-price in times of tranquillity and tape. Without effort of his own—by the mere force of the under-current—Guy Darrell was thrown up from oblivion into note. He could not form a cabinet—certainly not; but he might help to bring a cabinet together, reconcile jarring elements, adjust disputed questions, take in such government some high place, influence its councils, and delight a public weary of the oratory of the day with the eloquence of a former race. For the public is ever a *laudator temporis acti*, and whatever the authors or the orators immediately before it, were those authors and orators Homers and Ciceros, would still shake a disparaging head, and talk of these degenerate days, as Homer himself talked ages before Leonidas stood in the Pass of Thermopylæ, or Miltiades routed Asian armaments at Marathon. Guy Darrell belonged to a former race. The fathers of those young Members rising now into fame, had quoted to their sons his pithy sentences, his vivid images; and added, as Fox added when quoting Burke, "but you should have heard and seen the man!"

Heard and seen the man! But there he was again!—come up as from a grave—come up to

the public just when such a man was wanted. Wanted how? wanted where? Oh, somehow and somewhere! There he is! make the most of him.

The house in Carlton Gardens is prepared, the establishment mounted. Thither flock all the Viponts—nor they alone; all the chiefs of all parties—nor they alone; all the notabilities of our grand metropolis. Guy Darrell might be startled at his own position; but he comprehended its nature, and it did not discompose his nerves. He knew public life well enough to be aware how much the popular favor is the creature of an accident. By chance he had nicked the time; had he thus come to town the season before, he might have continued obscure; a man like Guy Darrell not being wanted then. Whether with or without design, his bearing confirmed and extended the effect produced by his reappearance. Gracious, but modestly reserved—he spoke little, listened beautifully. Many of the questions which agitated all around him had grown up into importance since his day of action; nor in his retirement had he traced their progressive development, with their changeful effects upon men and parties. But a man who has once gone deeply into practical politics might sleep in the cave of Trophonius for twenty years, and find, on waking, very little to learn. Darrell regained the level of the day, and seized upon all the strong points on which men were divided, with the rapidity of a prompt and comprehensive intellect—his judgment perhaps the clearer from the freshness of long repose, and the composure of dispassionate survey. When partisans wrangled as to what should have been done, Darrell was silent; when they asked what should *be* done, out came one of his terse sentences, and a knot was cut. Meanwhile it is true this man, round whom expectations grouped and rumor buzzed, was in neither House of Parliament; but that was rather a delay to his energies than a detriment to his consequence. Important constituencies, anticipating a vacancy, were already on the look-out for him; a smaller constituency, in the interim, Carr Vipont undertook to procure him any day. There was always a Vipont ready to accept something—even the Chiltern Hundreds. But Darrell, not without reason, demurred at re-entering the House of Commons after an absence of seventeen years. He had left it with one of those rare reputations which no wise man likes rashly to imperil. The Viponts sighed. He would certainly be more useful in the Commons than the Lords, but still in the Lords he would be of great use. They would want a debating lord, perhaps a lord acquainted with law in the coming CRISIS;—if he preferred the peerage? Darrell demurred still. The man's modesty was insufferable—his style of speaking might not suit that august assembly; and as to law—he could never now be a law lord—he should be but a ci-devant advocate, affecting the part of a judicial amateur.

In short, without declining to re-enter public life, seeming, on the contrary, to resume all his interest in it, Darrell contrived with admirable dexterity to elude for the present all overtures pressed upon him, and even to convince his admirers, not only of his wisdom but of his patriotism in that reticence. For certainly he thus managed to exercise a very considerable influence—his advice was more sought, his suggestions more heeded, and his power in reconciling certain rival jealousies was perhaps greater than would have been the case if he had actually entered either House of Parliament, and thrown himself exclusively into the ranks, not only of one party, but of one section of a party. Nevertheless, such suspense could not last very long; he must decide at all events before the next session. Once he was seen in the arena of his old triumphs, on the benches devoted to strangers distinguished by the Speaker's order. There, recognized by the older members, eagerly gazed at by the younger, Guy Darrell listened calmly, throughout a long field night, to voices that must have roused from forgotten graves, kindling and glorious memories; voices of those—veterans now—by whose side he had once struggled for some cause which he had then, in the necessary exaggeration of all honest enthusiasm, identified with a nation's life-blood. Voices too of the old antagonists, over whose routed arguments he had marched triumphant amidst applauses that the next day rang again through England from side to side. Hark, the very man with whom, in the old battle-days, he had been the most habitually pitted, is speaking now. His tones are embarrassed—his argument confused. Does he know who listens yonder? Old members think so—smile, whisper each other, and glance significantly where Darrell sits.

Sits, as became him, tranquil, respectful, intent, seemingly, perhaps really, unconscious of the sensation he excites. What an eye for an orator! how like the eye in a portrait! it seems to fix on each other eye that seeks it—steady, fascinating. Yon distant members behind the Speaker's chair, at the far distance, feel the light of that eye travel toward them. How lofty and massive among all those rows of human heads seems that forehead, bending slightly down, with the dark, strong line of the weighty eyebrow! But what is passing within that secret mind? Is there mournfulness in the retrospect? Is there eagerness to renew the strife? Is that interest in the Hour's debate feigned or real? Impossible for him who gazed upon that face to say. And that eye would have seemed to the gazer to read himself through and through to the heart's core, long ere the gazer could hazard a single guess as to the thoughts beneath that marble forehead, as to the emotions within the heart over which, in old senatorial fashion, the arms were folded with so conventional an ease.

CHAPTER VIII.

Darrell and Lionel.

DARRELL had received Lionel with some evident embarrassment, which soon yielded to affectionate warmth. He took to the young man whose fortunes he had so improved; he felt that with the improved fortunes the young man's whole being was improved;—assured position, early commune with the best social circles, in which the equality of fashion smooths away all disparities in rank, had softened in Lionel much of the wayward and morbid irritability of his boyish pride; but the high spirit, the generous

love of independence, the scorn of mercenary calculation, were strong as ever; these were in the grain of his nature. In common with all who in youth aspire to be one day noted from "the undistinguishable many," Lionel had formed to himself a certain ideal standard, above the ordinary level of what the world is contented to call honest, or esteem clever. He admitted into his estimate of life the heroic element, not undesirable even in the most practical point of view, for the world is so in the habit of decrying—of disbelieving in high motives and pure emotions—of daguerreotyping itself with all its ugliest wrinkles, stripped of the true bloom that brightens, of the true expression that redeems, those defects which it invites the sun to limn, that we shall never judge human nature aright, if we do not set out in life with our gaze on its fairest beauties, and our belief in its latent good. In a word, we should begin with the Heroic, if we would learn the Human. But though to himself Lionel thus secretly prescribed a certain superiority of type, to be sedulously aimed at, even if never actually attained, he was wholly without pedantry and arrogance toward his own contemporaries. From this he was saved not only by good-nature, animal spirits, frank hardihood, but by the very affluence of ideas which animated his tongue, colored his language, and whether to young or old, wise or dull, made his conversation racy and original. He was a delightful companion; and if he had taken much instruction from those older and wiser than himself, he so bathed that instruction in the fresh fountain of his own lively intelligence, so warmed it at his own beating, impulsive heart, that he could make an old man's gleanings from experience seem a young man's guesses into truth. Faults he had, of course — chiefly the faults common at his age; among them, perhaps, the most dangerous were—Firstly, carelessness in money matters; secondly, a distaste for advice in which prudence was visibly predominant. His tastes were not in reality extravagant; but money slipped through his hands, leaving little to show for it; and when his quarterly allowance became due, ample though it was—too ample, perhaps—debts wholly forgotten started up to seize hold of it. And debts, as yet being manageable, were not regarded with sufficient horror. Paid or put aside, as the case might be, they were merely looked upon as bores. Youth is in danger till it learn to look upon them as furies. For advice, he took it with pleasure, when clothed with elegance and art—when it addressed ambition—when it exalted the loftier virtues. But advice, practical and prosy, went in at one ear and out at the other. In fact, with many talents, he had yet no adequate ballast of common sense; and if ever he get enough to steady his bark through life's trying voyage, the necessity of so much dull weight must be forcibly striken home less to his reason than his imagination or his heart. But if, somehow or other, he get it not, I will not insure his vessel.

I know not if Lionel Haughton had genius; he never assumed that he had; but he had something more like genius than that prototype —RESOLVE—of which he boasted to the artist. He had youth — real youth — youth of mind, youth of heart, youth of soul. Lithe and supple as he moved before you, with the eye to which light or dew sprung at once from a nature vibrating to every lofty, every tender thought, he seemed more than young—the incarnation of youth.

Darrell took to him at once. Amidst all the engagements crowded on the important man, he contrived to see Lionel daily. And what may seem strange, Guy Darrell felt more at home with Lionel Haughton than with any of his own contemporaries—than even with Alban Morley. To the last, indeed, he opened speech with less reserve of certain portions of the past, or of certain projects in the future. But still, even there, he adopted a tone of half-playful, half-mournful satire, which might be in itself disguise. Alban Morley, with all his good qualities, was a man of the world; as a man of the world, Guy Darrell talked to him. But it was only a very small part of Guy Darrell the man of which the world could say "mine."

To Lionel he let out, as if involuntarily, the more amiable, tender, poetic attributes of his varying, complex, uncomprehended character; not professedly confiding, but not taking pains to conceal. Hearing what worldlings would call "Sentiment" in Lionel, he seemed to glide softly down to Lionel's own years, and talk "sentiment" in return. After all, this skilled lawyer, this noted politician, had a great dash of the boy still in him. Reader, did you ever meet a really clever man who had not?

CHAPTER IX.

Saith a very homely proverb (pardon its vulgarity), "You can not make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." But a sow's ear is a much finer work of art than a silk purse. And grand, indeed, the mechanician who could make a sow's ear out of a silk purse, or conjure into creatures of flesh and blood the sarcenet and *tulle* of a London drawing-room.

"MAMMA," asked Honoria Carr Vipont, "what sort of a person was Mrs. Darrell?"

"She was not in our set, my dear," answered Lady Selina. "The Vipont Crookes are just one of those connections in which, though, of course, one is civil to all connections, one is more or less intimate, according as they take after the Viponts or after the Crookes. Poor woman! she died just before Mr. Darrell entered Parliament, and appeared in society. But I should say she was not an agreeable person. Not nice," added Lady Selina, after a pause, and conveying a world of meaning in that conventional monosyllable.

"I suppose she was very accomplished—very clever?"

"Quite the reverse, my dear. Mr. Darrell was exceedingly young when he married—scarcely of age. She was not the sort of woman to suit him."

"But at least she must have been very much attached to him—very proud of him?"

Lady Selina glanced aside from her work, and observed her daughter's face, which evinced an animation not usual to a young lady of a breeding so lofty, and a mind so well disciplined.

"I don't think," said Lady Selina, "that she was proud of him. She would have been proud

of his station, or rather of that to which his fame and fortune would have raised her, had she lived to enjoy it. But for a few years after her marriage they were very poor; and though his rise at the bar was sudden and brilliant, he was long wholly absorbed in his profession, and lived in Bloomsbury. Mrs. Darrell was not proud of *that*. The Crookes are generally fine — give themselves airs—marry into great houses if they can—but we can't naturalize them—they always remain Crookes—useful connections, very! Carr says we have not a more useful—but third-rate, my dear. All the Crookes are bad wives, because they are never satisfied with their own homes, but are always trying to get into great people's homes. Not very long before she died, Mrs. Darrell took her friend and relation, Mrs. Lyndsay, to live with her. I suspect it was not from affection, or any great consideration for Mrs. Lyndsay's circumstances (which were indeed those of actual destitution, till—thanks to Mr. Darrell—she won her lawsuit), but simply because she looked to Mrs. Lyndsay to get her into our set. Mrs. Lyndsay was a great favorite with all of us, charming manners—perfectly correct, too—thorough Vipont—thorough gentlewoman—but artful! Oh, *so* artful! She humored poor Mrs. Darrell's absurd vanity; but she took care not to injure herself. Of course, Darrell's wife, and a Vipont—though only a Vipont Crooke—had free passport into the outskirts of good society, the great parties, and so forth. But there it stopped; even I should have been compromised if I had admitted into our set a woman who was bent on compromising herself. Handsome—in a bad style—not the Vipont *tournure;* and not only silly and flirting, but—(we are alone, keep the secret)—decidedly vulgar, my dear."

"You amaze me! How such a man—" Honoria stopped, coloring up to the temples.

"Clever men," said Lady Selina, "as a general rule, do choose the oddest wives! The cleverer a man is, the more easily, I do believe, a woman can take him in. However, to do Mr. Darrell justice, he has been taken in only once. After Mrs. Darrell's death, Mrs. Lyndsay, I suspect, tried her chance, but failed. Of course, she could not actually stay in the same house with a widower who was then young, and who had only to get rid of a wife to whom one was forced to be shy, in order to be received into our set with open arms; and, in short, to be of the very best *monde*. Mr. Darrell came into Parliament immensely rich (a legacy from an old East Indian, besides his own professional savings)—took the house he has now, close by us. Mrs. Lyndsay was obliged to retire to a cottage at Fulham. But as she professed to be a second mother to poor Matilda Darrell, she contrived to be very much at Carlton Gardens; her daughter Caroline was nearly always there, profiting by Matilda's masters; and I did think that Mrs. Lyndsay would have caught Darrell—but your papa said 'No,' and he was right, as he always is. Nevertheless, Mrs. Lyndsay would have been an excellent wife to a public man—so popular—knew the world so well—never made enemies till she made an enemy of poor dear Montfort; but that was natural. By-the-by, I must write to Caroline. Sweet creature! but how absurd, shutting herself up as if she were fretting for Montfort! That's so like her mother—heartless—but full of propriety."

Here Carr Vipont and Colonel Morley entered the room. "We have just left Darrell," said Carr; "he will dine here to-day, to meet our cousin Alban. I have asked *his* cousin, young Haughton, and * * * *, and * * * *, *your* cousins, Selina—(a small party of cousins)—so lucky to find Darrell disengaged."

"I ventured to promise," said the Colonel, addressing Honoria in an under voice, "that Darrell should hear you play Beethoven."

Honoria. "Is Mr. Darrell so fond of music, then?"

Colonel Morley. "One would not have thought it. He keeps a secretary at Fawley who plays the flute. There's something very interesting about Darrell. I wish you could hear his ideas on marriage and domestic life—more freshness of heart than in the young men one meets nowadays. It may be prejudice; but it seems to me that the young fellows of the present race, if more sober and staid than we were, are sadly wanting in character and spirit—no warm blood in their veins. But I should not talk thus to a demoiselle who has all those young fellows at her feet."

"Oh," said Lady Selina, overhearing, and with a half-laugh, "Honoria thinks much as you do; she finds the young men so insipid—all like one another—the same set phrases."

"The same stereotyped ideas," added Honoria, moving away with a gesture of calm disdain.

"A very superior mind hers," whispered the Colonel to Carr Vipont. "*She'll* never marry a fool."

Guy Darrell was very pleasant at "the small family dinner-party." Carr was always popular in his manners—the true old House of Commons manner, which was very like that of a gentlemanlike public school. Lady Selina, as has been said before, in her own family circle was natural and genial. Young Carr, there, without his wife, more pretentious than his father—being a Lord of the Admiralty—felt a certain awe of Darrell, and spoke little, which was much to his own credit, and to the general conviviality. The other members of the symposium, besides Lady Selina, Honoria, and a younger sister, were but Darrell, Lionel, and Lady Selina's two cousins; elderly peers—one with the garter, the other in the cabinet—jovial men, who had been wild fellows once in the same mess-room, and still joked at each other whenever they met as they met now. Lionel, who remembered Vance's description of Lady Selina, and who had since heard her spoken of in society as a female despot who carried to perfection the arts by which despots flourish, with majesty to impose, and caresses to deceive—an Aurungzebe in petticoats—was sadly at a loss to reconcile such portraiture with the good-humored, motherly woman who talked to him of her home, her husband, her children, with open fondness and becoming pride, and who, far from being so formidably clever as the world cruelly gave out, seemed to Lionel rather below par in her understanding; strike from her talk its kindliness, and the residue was very like twaddle. After dinner, various members of the Vipont family dropped in—asked impromptu by Carr or by Lady Selina, in hasty three-cornered

notes, to take that occasion of renewing their acquaintance with their distinguished connection. By some accident, among those invited there were but few young single ladies; and by some other accident, those few were all plain. Honoria Vipont was unequivocally the belle of the room. It could not but be observed that Darrell seemed struck with her—talked with her more than with any other lady; and when she went to the piano, and played that great air of Beethoven's, in which music seems to have got into a knot that only fingers the most artful can unravel, Darrell remained in his seat aloof and alone, listening, no doubt, with ravished attention. But just as the air ended, and Honoria turned round to look for him, he was gone.

Lionel did not linger long after him. The gay young man went, thence, to one of those vast crowds which seem convened for a practical parody of Mr. Bentham's famous proposition—contriving the smallest happiness for the greatest number.

It was a very great house, belonging to a very great person. Colonel Morley had procured an invitation for Lionel, and said, "Go; *you* should be seen there." Colonel Morley had passed the age of growing-into society—no such cares for the morrow could add a cubit to his conventional stature. One among a group of other young men by the door-way, Lionel beheld Darrell, who had arrived before him, listening to a very handsome young lady, with an attention quite as earnest as that which had gratified the superior mind of the well-educated Honoria. A very handsome young lady certainly, but not with a superior mind, nor supposed hitherto to have found young gentlemen "insipid." Doubtless she would henceforth do so. A few minutes after, Darrell was listening again—this time to another young lady, generally called "fast." If his attentions to her were not marked, hers to him were. She rattled on to him volubly, laughed, pretty hoyden, at her own sallies, and seemed at last so to fascinate him by her gay spirits that he sate down by her side; and the playful smile on his lips—lips that had learned to be so gravely firm—showed that he could enter still into the mirth of childhood; for surely to the time-worn man the fast young lady must have seemed but a giddy child. Lionel was amused. Could this be the austere recluse whom he had left in the shades of Fawley? Guy Darrell, at his years, with his dignified repute, the object of so many nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles—could *he* descend to be that most frivolous of characters, a male coquette? Was he in earnest—was his vanity duped? Looking again, Lionel saw in his kinsman's face a sudden return of the sad despondent expression which had moved his own young pity in the solitudes of Fawley. But in a moment the man roused himself—the sad expression was gone. Had the girl's merry laugh again chased it away? But Lionel's attention was now drawn from Darrell himself to the observations murmured round him, of which Darrell was the theme.

"Yes, he is bent on marrying again! I have it from Alban Morley—immense fortune—and so young-looking, any girl might fall in love with such eyes and forehead; besides, what a jointure he could settle! . . . Do look at that girl, Flora Vyvyan, trying to make a fool of him. She can't appreciate that kind of man, and she would not be caught by his money—does not want it. . . . I wonder she is not afraid of him. He is certainly quizzing her. . . . The men think her pretty—I don't. . . . They say he is to return to Parliament, and have a place in the Cabinet. . . . No! he has no children living—very natural he should marry again. . . . A nephew!—you are quite mistaken. Young Haughton is no nephew—a very distant connection—could not expect to be the heir. . . . It was given out though, at Paris. The Duchess thought so, and so did Lady Jane. They'll not be so civil to young Haughton now. . . . Hush—"

Lionel, wishing to hear no more, glided by, and penetrated farther into the throng. And then, as he proceeded, with those last words on his ear, the consciousness came upon him that his position had undergone a change. Difficult to define it; to an ordinary by-stander, people would have seemed to welcome him cordially as ever. The gradations of respect in polite society are so exquisitely delicate, that it seems only by a sort of magnetism that one knows from day to day whether one has risen or declined. A man has lost high office, patronage, power, never, perhaps, to regain them. People don't turn their backs on him; their smiles are as gracious, their hands as flatteringly extended. But that man would be dull as a rhinoceros if he did not feel as every one who accosts him feels—that he has descended in the ladder. So with all else. Lose even your fortune, it is not the next day in a London drawing-room that your friends look as if you were going to ask them for five pounds. Wait a year or so for that. But if they have just heard you are ruined, you will *feel* that they have heard it, let them bow ever so courteously, smile ever so kindly. Lionel at Paris, in the last year or so, had been more than fashionable: he had been the fashion—courted, run after, petted, quoted, imitated. That evening he felt as an author may feel who has been the rage, and, without fault of his own, is so no more. The rays that had gilt him had gone back to the orb that lent. And they who were most genial still to Lionel Haughton, were those who still most respected thirty-five thousand pounds a year—in Guy Darrell!

Lionel was angry with himself that he felt galled. But in his wounded pride there was no mercenary regret—only that sort of sickness which comes to youth when the hollowness of worldly life is first made clear to it. From the faces round him there fell that glamour by which the *amour propre* is held captive in large assemblies, where the *amour propre* is flattered. "Magnificent, intelligent audience," thinks the applauded actor. "Delightful party," murmurs the worshiped beauty. Glamour! glamour! Let the audience yawn while the actor mouths; let the party neglect the beauty to adore another, and straightway the "magnificent audience" is an "ignorant public," and "the delightful party" a "heartless world."

CHAPTER X.

Escaped from a London Drawing-Room, flesh once more tingles, and blood flows—Guy Darrell explains to Lionel Haughton why he holds it a duty to be—an old fool.

Lionel Haughton glided through the disenchanted rooms, and breathed a long breath of relief when he found himself in the friendless streets.

As he walked slow and thoughtful on, he suddenly felt a hand upon his shoulder, turned, and saw Darrell.

"Give me your arm, my dear Lionel; I am tired out. What a lovely night! What sweet scorn in the eyes of those stars that we have neglected for yon flaring lights!"

Lionel. "Is it scorn—is it pity? Is it but serene indifference?"

Darrell. "As we ourselves interpret; if scorn be present in our own hearts, it will be seen in the disc of Jupiter. Man, egoist though he be, exacts sympathy from all the universe. Joyous, he says to the sun, 'Life-giver, rejoice with me.' Grieving, he says to the moon, 'Pensive one, thou sharest my sorrow.' Hope for fame; a star is its promise! Mourn for the dead; a star is the land of reunion! Say to Earth, 'I have done with thee;' to Time, 'Thou hast naught to bestow;' and all Space cries aloud, 'The earth is a speck, thine inheritance infinity. Time melts while thou sighest. The discontent of a mortal is the instinct that proves thee immortal.' Thus construing Nature, Nature is our companion, our consoler. Benign as the playmate, she lends herself to our shifting humors. Serious as the teacher, she responds to the steadier inquiries of reason. Mystic and hallowed as the priestess, she keeps alive by dim oracles that spiritual yearning within us, in which, from savage to sage—through all dreams, through all creeds—thrills the sense of a link with Divinity. Never, therefore, while conferring with Nature, is Man wholly alone, nor is she a single companion with uniform shape. Ever new, ever various, she can pass from gay to severe—from fancy to science—quick as thought passes from the dance of a leaf, from the tint of a rainbow, to the theory of motion, the problem of light. But lose Nature—forget or dismiss her—make companions, by hundreds, of men who ignore her, and I will not say with the poet, 'This is solitude.' But in the commune, what stale monotony, what weary sameness!"

Thus Darrell continued to weave together sentence with sentence, the intermediate connection of meaning often so subtle, that when put down on paper it requires effort to discern it. But it was his peculiar gift to make clear when spoken what in writing would seem obscure. Look, manner, each delicate accent in a voice wonderfully distinct in its unrivaled melody, all so aided the sense of mere words, that it is scarcely extravagant to say he might have talked an unknown language, and a listener would have understood. But, understood or not, those sweet intonations it was such delight to hear, that any one with nerves alive to music would have murmured, "Talk on forever." And in this gift lay one main secret of the man's strange influence over all who came familiarly into his intercourse; so that if Darrell had ever bestowed confidential intimacy on any one not by some antagonistic idiosyncracy steeled against its charm, and that intimacy had been withdrawn, a void never to be refilled must have been left in the life thus robbed.

Stopping at his door, as Lionel, rapt by the music, had forgotten the pain of the reverie so bewitchingly broken, Darrell detained the hand held out to him, and said, "No, not yet—I have something to say to you: come in; let me say it now."

Lionel bowed his head, and in surprised conjecture followed his kinsman up the lofty stairs into the same comfortless stately room that has been already described. When the servant closed the door, Darrell sank into a chair. Fixing his eyes upon Lionel with almost parental kindness, and motioning his young cousin to sit by his side, close, he thus began:

"Lionel, before I was your age I was married—I was a father. I am lonely and childless now. My life has been moulded by a solemn obligation which so few could comprehend, that I scarce know a man living beside yourself to whom I would frankly confide it. Pride of family is a common infirmity—often petulant with the poor, often insolent with the rich; but rarely, perhaps, out of that pride do men construct a positive binding duty, which at all self-sacrifice should influence the practical choice of life. As a child, before my judgment could discern how much of vain superstition may lurk in our reverence for the dead, my whole heart was engaged in a passionate dream, which my waking existence became vowed to realize. My father!—my lip quivers, my eyes moisten as I recall him, even now—my father!—I loved him so intensely!—the love of childhood how fearfully strong it is! All in him was so gentle, yet so sensitive—chivalry without its armor. I was his constant companion: he spoke to me unreservedly, as a poet to his muse. I wept at his sorrows—I chafed at his humiliations. He talked of ancestors as he thought of them; to him they were beings like the old Lares—not dead in graves, but images ever present on household hearths. Doubtless he exaggerated their worth—as their old importance. Obscure, indeed, in the annals of empire, their deeds and their power, their decline and fall. Not so thought he; they were to his eyes the moon track in the ocean of history—light on the waves over which they had gleamed—all the ocean elsewhere dark! With him thought I; as my father spoke, his child believed. But what to the eyes of the world was this inheritor of a vaunted name?—a threadbare, slighted, rustic pedent—no station in the very province in which mouldered away the last lowly dwelling-place of his line. By lineage high above most nobles, in position below most yeomen. He had learning, he had genius; but the studies to which they were devoted only served yet more to impoverish his scanty means, and led rather to ridicule than to honor. Not a day but what I saw on his soft features the smart of a fresh sting, the gnawing of a new care. Thus, as a boy, feeling in myself a strength inspired by affection, I came to him, one day as he sate grieving, and kneeling to him, said, 'Father, courage yet a little while; I shall soon be man, and I swear to devote myself as man to revive the old fading race so prized by you; to rebuild the House that, by you so loved, is loftier in my

eyes than all the heraldry of kings.' And my father's face brightened, and his voice blessed me; and I rose up ambitious!" Darrell paused, heaved a short, quick sigh, and then rapidly continued:

"I was fortunate at the university. That was a day when chiefs of party looked for recruits among young men who had given the proofs, and won the first fruits of emulation and assiduity. For statesmanship then was deemed an art which, like that of war, needs early discipline. I had scarcely left college when I was offered a seat in Parliament by the head of the Viponts, an old Lord Montfort. I was dazzled but for one moment—I declined the next. The fallen House of Darrell needed wealth, and Parliamentary success, in its higher honors, often requires wealth—never gives it. It chanced that I had a college acquaintance with a young man named Vipont Crooke. His grandfather, one of the numberless Viponts, had been compelled to add the name of Crooke to his own on succeeding to the property of some rich uncle, who was one of the numberless Crookes. I went with this college acquaintance to visit the old Lord Montfort, at his villa near London, and thence to the country house of the Vipont Crookes. I staid at the last two or three weeks. While there, I received a letter from the elder Fairthorn, my father's bailiff, entreating me to come immediately to Fawley, hinting at some great calamity. On taking leave of my friend and his family, something in the manner of his sister startled and pained me—an evident confusion, a burst of tears—I know not what. I had never sought to win her affections. I had an ideal of the woman I could love. It did not resemble her. On reaching Fawley, conceive the shock that awaited me. My father was like one heart-stricken. The principal mortgagee was about to foreclose—Fawley about to pass forever from the race of the Darrells. I saw that the day my father was driven from the old house would be his last on earth. What means to save him?—how raise the pitiful sum—but a few thousands—by which to release from the spoiler's gripe those barren acres which all the lands of the Seymour or the Gower could never replace in my poor father's eyes? My sole income was a college fellowship, adequate to all my wants, but useless for sale or loan. I spent the night in vain consultation with Fairthorn. There seemed not a hope. Next morning came a letter from young Vipont Crooke. It was manly and frank, though somewhat coarse. With the consent of his parents he offered me his sister's hand, and a dowry of £10,000. He hinted, in excuse for his bluntness, that, perhaps from motives of delicacy, if I felt a preference for his sister, I might not deem myself rich enough to propose, and—but it matters not what else he said. You foresee the rest. My father's life could be saved from despair—his beloved home be his shelter to the last. That dowry would more than cover the paltry debt upon the lands. I gave myself not an hour to pause. I hastened back to the house to which fate had led me. But," said Darrell, proudly, "do not think I was base enough, even with such excuses, to deceive the young lady. I told her what was true; that I could not profess to her the love painted by romance-writers and poets; but that I loved no other, and that, if she deigned to accept my hand, I should studiously consult her happiness, and gratefully confide to her my own. I said also, what was true, that, if she married me, ours must be for some years a life of privation and struggle; that even the interest of her fortune must be devoted to my father while he lived, though every shilling of its capital would be settled on herself and her children. How I blessed her when she accepted me, despite my candor!—how earnestly I prayed that I might love, and cherish, and requite her!" Darrell paused, in evident suffering. "And, thank Heaven! I have nothing on that score wherewith to reproach myself. And the strength of that memory enabled me to bear and forbear more than otherwise would have been possible to my quick spirit, and my man's heart. My dear father! his death was happy—his home was saved—he never knew at what sacrifice to his son! He was gladdened by the first honors my youth achieved. He was resigned to my choice of a profession, which, though contrary to his antique prejudices, that allowed to the representative of the Darrells no profession but the sword, still promised the wealth which would secure his name from perishing. He was credulous of my future, as if I had uttered, not a vow, but a prediction. He had blessed my union, without foreseeing its sorrows. He had embraced my first-born—true, it was a girl, but it was one link onward from ancestors to posterity. And almost his last words were these: 'You *will* restore the race—you *will* revive the name! and my son's children will visit the antiquary's grave, and learn gratitude to him for all that his idle lessons taught to your healthier vigor.' And I answered: 'Father, your line shall not perish from the land; and when I am rich and great, and lordships spread far round the lowly hall that your life ennobled, I will say to your grandchildren, "Honor ye and your son's sons, while a Darrell yet treads the earth—honor him to whom I owe every thought which nerved me to toil for what you who come after me may enjoy."'

"And so the old man, whose life had been so smileless, died smiling."

By this time Lionel had stolen Darrell's hand into his own—his heart swelling with childlike tenderness, and the tears rolling down his cheeks.

Darrell gently kissed his young kinsman's forehead, and, extricating himself from Lionel's clasp, paced the room, and spoke on while pacing it.

"I made, then, a promise; it is not kept. No child of mine survives to be taught reverence to my father's grave. My wedded life was not happy: its record needs no words. Of two children born to me, both are gone. My son went first. I had thrown my life's life into him—a boy of energy, of noble promise. 'Twas for him I began to build that baffled fabric—'*Sepulchri immemor.*' For him I bought, acre on acre, all the land within reach of Fawley—lands twelve miles distant. I had meant to fill up the intervening space—to buy out a mushroom Earl, whose woods and corn-fields lie between. I was scheming the purchase—scrawling on the county map—when they brought the news that the boy I had just taken back to school was dead—

drowned bathing on a calm summer eve! No, Lionel. I must go on. *That* grief I have wrestled with—conquered. I was widowed then. A daughter still left—the first-born, whom my father had blessed on his death-bed. I transferred all my love, all my hopes, to her. I had no vain preference for male heirs. Is a race less pure that runs on through the female line? Well, my son's death was merciful compared to—" Again Darrell stopped—again hurried on. "Enough! all is forgiven in the grave! I was then still in the noon of man's life, free to form new ties. Another grief that I can not tell you; it is not all conquered yet. And by that grief the last verdure of existence was so blighted, that—that—in short, I had no heart for nuptial altars—for the social world. Years went by. Each year I said, 'Next year the wound will be healed; I have time yet.' Now age is near, the grave not far; now, if ever, I must fulfill the promise that cheered my father's death-bed. Nor does that duty comprise all my motives. If I would regain healthful thought, manly action, for my remaining years, I must feel that one haunting memory is exorcised, and forever laid at rest. It can be so only—whatever my risk of new cares—whatever the folly of the hazard at my age—be so only by—by—" Once more Darrell paused, fixed his eyes steadily on Lionel, and, opening his arms, cried out, "Forgive me, my noble Lionel, that I am not contented with an heir like you; and do not you mock at the old man who dreams that woman may love him yet, and that his own children may inherit his father's home."

Lionel sprang to the breast that opened to him; and if Darrell had planned how best to remove from the young man's mind forever the possibility of one selfish pang, no craft could have attained his object like that touching confidence before which the disparities between youth and age literally vanished. And, both made equal, both elevated alike, verily I know not which at the moment felt the elder or the younger! Two noble hearts, intermingled in one emotion, are set free from all time save the present; par each with each, they meet as brothers twin-born.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

Vignettes for the next Book of Beauty.

"I QUITE agree with you, Alban; Honoria Vipont is a very superior young lady."

"I knew you would think so!" cried the Colonel, with more warmth than usual to him.

"Many years since," resumed Darrell, with reflective air, "I read Miss Edgeworth's novels; and in conversing with Miss Honoria Vipont, methinks I confer with one of Miss Edgeworth's heroines—so rational, so prudent, so well-behaved—so free from silly romantic notions—so replete with solid information, moral philosophy, and natural history—so sure to regulate her watch and her heart to the precise moment, for the one to strike, and the other to throb—and to marry at last a respectable steady husband, whom she will win with dignity, and would lose with—decorum! A very superior girl, indeed."*

"Though your description of Miss Vipont is satirical," said Alban Morley, smiling, in spite of some irritation, "yet I will accept it as panegyric; for it conveys, unintentionally, a just idea of the qualities that make an intelligent companion and a safe wife. And those are the qualities we must look to, if we marry at our age. We are no longer boys," added the Colonel, sententiously.

DARRELL. "Alas, no! I wish we were. But the truth of your remark is indisputable. Ah, look! Is not that a face which might make an octogenarian forget that he is not a boy?—what regular features! and what a blush!"

The friends were riding in the park; and as Darrell spoke, he bowed to a young lady, who, with one or two others, passed rapidly by in a barouche. It was that very handsome young lady to whom Lionel had seen him listening so attentively in the great crowd, for which Carr Vipont's family party had been deserted.

"Yes; Lady Adela is one of the loveliest girls in London," said the Colonel, who had also lifted his hat as the barouche whirled by, "and amiable too: I have known her ever since she was born. Her father and I are great friends—an excellent man, but stingy. I had much difficulty in arranging the eldest girl's marriage with Lord Bolton, and am a trustee in the settlements. If you feel a preference for Lady Adela, though I don't think she would suit you so well as Miss Vipont, I will answer for her father's encouragement and her consent. 'Tis no drawback to you, though it is to most of her admirers, when I add, 'There's nothing with her!'"

"And nothing in her! which is worse," said Darrell. "Still, it is pleasant to gaze on a beautiful landscape, even though the soil be barren."

COLONEL MORLEY. "That depends upon whether you are merely the artistic spectator of the landscape, or the disappointed proprietor of the soil."

"Admirable!" said Darrell; "you have disposed of Lady Adela. So ho! so ho!" Darrell's horse (his old high-mettled horse, freshly sent to him from Fawley, and in spite of the five years that had added to its age, of spirit made friskier by long repose) here put down its ears—lashed out—and indulged in a bound

* Darrell speaks—not the author. Darrell is unjust to the more exquisite female characters of a Novelist, admirable for strength of sense, correctness of delineation, terseness of narrative, and lucidity of style—nor less admirable for the unexaggerated nobleness of sentiment by which some of her heroines are notably distinguished.

which would have unseated many a London rider. A young Amazon, followed hard by some two or three young gentlemen and their grooms, shot by, swift and reckless as a hero at Balaklava. But with equal suddenness, as she caught sight of Darrell—whose hand and voice had already soothed the excited nerves of his steed—the Amazon wheeled round and gained his side. Throwing up her vail, she revealed a face so prettily arch—so perversely gay—with eye of radiant hazel, and fair locks half loosened from their formal braid—that it would have beguiled resentment from the most insensible—reconciled to danger the most timid. And yet there was really a grace of humility in the apologies she tendered for her discourtesy and thoughtlessness. As the girl reined her light palfrey by Darrell's side—turning from the young companions who had now joined her, their hackneys in a foam—and devoting to his ear all her lively overflow of happy spirits, not untempered by a certain deference, but still apparently free from dissimulation—Darrell's grand face lighted up—his mellow laugh, unrestrained, though low, echoed her sportive tones; her youth, her joyousness were irresistibly contagious. Alban Morley watched observant, while interchanging talk with her attendant comrades, young men of high *ton*, but who belonged to that *jeunesse dorée*, with which the surface of life patrician is frittered over—young men with few ideas, fewer duties—but with plenty of leisure—plenty of health—plenty of money in their pockets—plenty of debts to their tradesmen—daring at Melton—scheming at Tattersall's—pride to maiden aunts—plague to thrifty fathers—fickle lovers, but solid matches—in brief, fast livers, who get through their youth betimes, and who, for the most part, middle-aged before they are thirty—tamed by wedlock—sobered by the responsibilities that come with the cares of property and the dignities of rank—undergo abrupt metamorphosis into chairmen of quarter sessions—county members, or decorous peers—their ideas enriched as their duties grow—their opinions, once loose as willows to the wind, stiffening into the palisades of fenced propriety—valuable, busy men, changed as Henry V., when, coming into the cares of state, he said to the Chief Justice, "There is my hand;" and to Sir John Falstaff,

> "I know thee not, old man;
> Fall to thy prayers!"

But, meanwhile, the *élite* of this *jeunesse dorée* glittered round Flora Vyvyan: not a regular beauty like Lady Adela—not a fine girl like Miss Vipont, but such a light, faultless figure—such a pretty, radiant face—more womanly for affecting to be manlike—Hebe aping Thalestris. Flora, too, was an heiress—an only child—spoiled, willful—not at all accomplished (my belief is that accomplishments are thought great bores by the *jeunesse dorée*)—no accomplishment except horsemanship, with a slight knack at billiards, and the capacity to take three whiffs from a Spanish *cigarette*. That last was adorable—four offers had been advanced to her hand on that merit alone. (N.B. Young ladies do themselves no good with the *jeunesse dorée*, which, in our time, is a lover that rather smokes than "sighs like furnace," by advertising their horror of cigars.) You would suppose that Flora Vyvyan must be coarse—vulgar perhaps; not at all; she was *piquante*—original; and did the oddest things with the air and look of the highest breeding. Fairies can not be vulgar, no matter what they do; they may take the strangest liberties—pinch the maids, turn the house topsy-turvy; but they are ever the darlings of grace and poetry. Flora Vyvyan was a fairy. Not peculiarly intellectual herself, she had a veneration for intellect; those fast young men were the last persons likely to fascinate that fast young lady. Women are so perverse; they always prefer the very people you would least suspect—the antitheses to themselves. Yet is it possible that Flora Vyvyan can have carried her crotchets to so extravagant a degree as to have designed the conquest of Guy Darrell—ten years older than her own father? She, too, an heiress—certainly not mercenary; she who had already refused better worldly matches than Darrell himself was—young men, handsome men, with coronets on the margin of their note-paper and the panels of their broughams? The idea seemed preposterous; nevertheless, Alban Morley, a shrewd observer, conceived that idea, and trembled for his friend.

At last the young lady and her satellites shot off, and the Colonel said, cautiously, "Miss Vyvyan is—alarming."

Darrell. "Alarming! the epithet requires construing."

Colonel Morley. "The sort of girl who might make a man of our years really and literally—an old fool!"

Darrell. "Old fool such a man must be if girls of any sort are permitted to make him a greater fool than he was before. But I think that, with those pretty hands resting on one's arm-chair, or that sunny face shining into one's study windows, one might be a very happy old fool—and that is the most one can expect!"

Colonel Morley (checking an anxious groan). "I am afraid, my poor friend, you are far gone already. No wonder Honoria Vipont fails to be appreciated. But Lady Selina has a maxim—the truth of which my experience attests—'the moment it comes to women, the most sensible men are the—'"

"Oldest fools!" put in Darrell. "If Mark Antony made such a goose of himself for that painted harridan Cleopatra, what would he have done for a blooming Juliet? Youth and high spirits! Alas! why are these to be unsuitable companions for us, as we reach that climax in time and sorrow—when to the one we are grown the most indulgent, and of the other have the most need? Alban, that girl, if her heart were really won—her wild nature wisely mastered—gently guided—would make a true, prudent, loving, admirable wife—"

"Heavens!" cried Alban Morley.

"To such a husband," pursued Darrell, unheeding the ejaculation, "as—Lionel Haughton. What say you?"

"Lionel—oh, I have no objection at all to that; but he's too young yet to think of marriage—a mere boy. Besides, if you yourself marry, Lionel could scarcely aspire to a girl of Miss Vyvyan's birth and fortune."

"Ho, not aspire! That boy, at least, shall not have to woo in vain from the want of fortune. The day I marry—if ever that day come—I settle on Lionel Haughton and his heirs

five thousand a year; and if, with gentle blood, youth, good looks, and a heart of gold, that fortune does not allow him to aspire to any girl whose hand he covets, I can double it, and still be rich enough to buy a superior companion in Honoria Vipont—"

MORLEY. "Don't say buy—"

DARRELL. "Ay, and still be young enough to catch a butterfly in Lady Adela — still be bold enough to chain a panther in Flora Vyvyan. Let the world know—your world in each nook of its gaudy auction mart—that Lionel Haughton is no pauper cousin — no penniless fortune-hunter. I wish that world to be kind to him while he is yet young, and can enjoy it. Ah, Morley, Pleasure, like Punishment, hobbles after us, *pede claudo*. What would have delighted us yesterday does not catch us up till to-morrow, and yesterday's pleasure is not the morrow's. A pennyworth of sugar-plums would have made our eyes sparkle when we were scrawling pothooks at a preparatory school, but no one gave us sugar-plums then. Now, every day at dessert France heaps before us her daintiest sugar-plums in gilt *bonbonnieres*. Do you ever covet them? I never do. Let Lionel have his sugar-plums in time. And as we talk, there he comes. Lionel, how are you?"

"I resign you to Lionel's charge now," said the Colonel, glancing at his watch. "I have an engagement — troublesome. Two silly friends of mine have been quarreling—high words—in an age when duels are out of the question. I have promised to meet another man, and draw up the form for a mutual apology. High words are so stupid nowadays. No option but to swallow them up again if they were as high as steeples. Adieu for the present. We meet to-night at Lady Dulcett's concert?"

"Yes," said Darrell; "I promised Miss Vyvyan to be there, and keep her from disturbing the congregation. You, Lionel, will come with me."

LIONEL (embarrassed). "No; you must excuse me. I have long been engaged elsewhere."

"That's a pity," said the Colonel, gravely. "Lady Dulcett's concert is just one of the places where a young man should—be seen." Colonel Morley waved his hand with his usual languid elegance, and his hack cantered off with him, stately as a charger, easy as a rocking-horse.

"Unalterable man," said Darrell, as his eye followed the horseman's receding figure. "Through all the mutations on Time's dusty high road—stable as a milestone. Just what Alban Morley was as a school-boy he is now; and if mortal span were extended to the age of the patriarchs, just what Alban Morley is now Alban Morley would be a thousand years hence. I don't mean externally, of course; wrinkles will come—cheeks will fade. But these are trifles; man's body is a garment, as Socrates said before me, and every seven years, according to the physiologists, man has a new suit, fibre and cuticle, from top to toe. The interior being that wears the clothes is the same in Alban Morley. Has he loved, hated, rejoiced, suffered? Where is the sign? Not one. At school, as in life, doing nothing, but decidedly somebody—respected by small boys, petted by big boys—an authority with all. Never getting honors—arm and arm with those who did; never in scrapes—advising those who were; imperturbable, immovable, calm above mortal cares as an Epicurean deity. What can wealth give that he has not got? In the houses of the richest he chooses his room. Talk of ambition, talk of power—he has their rewards without an effort. True prime minister of all the realm he cares for; Good Society has not a vote against him—he transacts its affairs, he knows its secrets—he wields its patronage. Ever requested to do a favor — no man great enough to do him one. Incorruptible, yet versed to a fraction in each man's price; impeccable, yet confident in each man's foibles; smooth as silk, hard as adamant; impossible to wound, vex, annoy him—but not insensible; thoroughly kind. Dear, dear Alban! Nature never polished a finer gentleman out of a solider block of man!" Darrell's voice quivered a little as he completed in earnest affection the sketch begun in playful irony, and then, with a sudden change of thought, he resumed lightly,

"But I wish you to do me a favor, Lionel. Aid me to repair a fault in good breeding, of which Alban Morley would never have been guilty. I have been several days in London, and not yet called on your mother. Will you accompany me now to her house and present me?"

"Thank you, thank you! you will make her so proud and happy; but may I ride on and prepare her for your visit?"

"Certainly; her address is—"

"Gloucester Place, No. —."

"I will meet you there in half an hour."

CHAPTER II.

"Let Observation, with expansive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru,"

—and Observation will every where find, indispensable to the happiness of woman, A VISITING ACQUAINTANCE.

LIONEL knew that Mrs. Haughton would that day need more than usual forewarning of a visit from Mr. Darrell. For the evening of that day Mrs. Haughton proposed "to give a party." When Mrs. Haughton gave a party, it was a serious affair. A notable and bustling housewife, she attended herself to each preparatory detail. It was to assist at this party that Lionel had resigned Lady Dulcett's concert. The young man, reluctantly acquiescing in the arrangements by which Alban Morley had engaged him a lodging of his own, seldom or never let a day pass without gratifying his mother's proud heart by an hour or two spent in Gloucester Place, often to the forfeiture of a pleasant ride, or other tempting excursion, with gay comrades. Difficult in London life, and at the full of its season, to devote an hour or two to visits, apart from the track chalked out by one's very mode of existence—difficult to cut off an hour so as not to cut up a day. And Mrs. Haughton was exacting—nice in her choice as to the exact slice in the day. She took the prime of the joint. She liked her neighbors to see the handsome, elegant, young man dismount from his charger, or descend from his cabriolet, just at the witching hour when Gloucester Place was fullest. Did he go to a levee, he must be sure to come to her before he changed his dress, that she and Gloucester Place might admire him in uniform. Was he going to dine

at some very great house, he must take her in his way (though no street could be more out of his way), that she might be enabled to say in the parties to which she herself repaired, "There is a great dinner at Lord So-and-so's to-day; my son called on me before he went there. If he had been disengaged, I should have asked permission to bring him here."

Not that Mrs. Haughton honestly designed, nor even wished, to draw the young man from the dazzling vortex of high life into her own little currents of dissipation. She was much too proud of Lionel to think that her friends were grand enough for him to honor *their* houses by his presence. She had in this, too, a lively recollection of her lost Captain's doctrinal views of the great world's creed. The Captain had flourished in the time when Impertinence, installed by Brummell, though her influence was waning, still schooled her oligarchs, and maintained the etiquette of her court; and even when his *mésalliance* and his debts had cast him out of his native sphere, he lost not all the original brightness of an exclusive. In moments of connubial confidence, when owning his past errors, and tracing to his sympathizing Jessie the causes of his decline, he would say, "'Tis not a man's birth, nor his fortune, that gives him his place in society—it depends on his conduct, Jessie. He must not be seen bowing to snobs, nor should his enemies track him to the haunts of vulgarians. I date my fall in life to dining with a horrid man who lent me £100, and lived in Upper Baker Street. His wife took my arm from a place they called a drawing-room (the Captain as he spoke was on a fourth floor), to share some unknown food which they called a dinner (the Captain at that moment would have welcomed a rasher). The woman went about blabbing—the thing got wind—for the first time my character received a soil. What is a man without character? and character once sullied, Jessie, a man becomes reckless. Teach my boy to beware of the first false step—no association with *parvenus*. Don't cry, Jessie—I don't mean that he is to cut *you*—relations are quite different from other people—nothing so low as cutting relations. I continued, for instance, to visit Guy Darrell, though he lived at the back of Holborn, and I actually saw him once in brown beaver gloves. But he was a relation. I have even dined at his house, and met odd people there—people who lived also at the back of Holborn. But he did not ask me to go to *their* houses, and if he had, I must have cut him."

By reminiscences of this kind of talk Lionel was saved from any design of Mrs. Haughton's to attract his orbit into the circle within which she herself moved. He must come to the parties she gave—illumine or awe odd people *there*. That was a proper tribute to maternal pride. But had they asked him to their parties, she would have been the first to resent such a liberty.

Lionel found Mrs. Haughton in great bustle. A gardener's cart was before the street-door. Men were bringing in a grove of evergreens, intended to border the stair-case, and make its exiguous ascent still more difficult. The refreshments were already laid out in the dining-room. Mrs. Haughton, with scissors in hand, was cutting flowers to fill the *epergne*, but darting to and fro, like a dragon-fly, from the dining-room to the hall, from the flowers to the evergreens.

"Dear me, Lionel, is that you? Just tell me, you who go to all those grandees, whether the ratafia-cakes should be opposite to the sponge-cakes, or whether they would not go better—thus—at cross-corners?"

"My dear mother, I never observed—I don't know. But make haste—take off that apron—have these doors shut—come up stairs. Mr. Darrell will be here very shortly. I have ridden on to prepare you."

"Mr. Darrell—TO-DAY!—How could you let him come? Oh, Lionel, how thoughtless you are! You should have some respect for your mother—I *am* your mother, Sir."

"Yes, my own dear mother—don't scold—I could not help it. He is so engaged, so sought after; if I had put him off to-day he might never have come, and—"

"Never have come! Who is Mr. Darrell, to give himself such airs?—Only a lawyer, after all," said Mrs. Haughton, with majesty.

"Oh, mother, that speech is not like you. He is our benefactor—our—"

"Don't, don't say more—I was very wrong—quite wicked—only my temper, Lionel dear. Good Mr. Darrell! I shall be so happy to see him—see him, too, in this house that I owe to him—see him by your side! I think I shall fall down on my knees to him."

And her eyes began to stream.

Lionel kissed the tears away fondly. "That's my own mother now indeed—now I am proud of you, mother; and how well you look!—I am proud of that too."

"Look well!—I am not fit to be seen, this figure—though perhaps an elderly quiet gentleman like good Mr. Darrell does not notice ladies much. John, John, make haste with those plants. Gracious me! you've got your coat off!—put it on—I expect a gentleman—I'm at home, in the front drawing-room—no—that's all set out—the back drawing-room, John. Send Susan to me. Lionel, do just look at the supper-table; and what is to be done with the flowers, and—"

The rest of Mrs. Haughton's voice, owing to the rapidity of her ascent, which affected the distinctness of her utterance, was lost in air. She vanished at culminating point—within her chamber.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Haughton at home to Guy Darrell.

THANKS to Lionel's activity, the hall was disencumbered—the plants hastily stowed away—the parlor closed on the festive preparations—and the footman in his livery waiting at the door—when Mr. Darrell arrived. Lionel himself came out and welcomed his benefactor's footstep across the threshold of the home which the generous man had provided for the widow.

If Lionel had some secret misgivings as to the result of this interview, they were soon and most happily dispelled. For, at the sight of Guy Darrell leaning so affectionately on her son's arm, Mrs. Haughton mechanically gave herself up to the impulse of her own warm, grateful, true woman's heart. And her bound forward

—her seizure of Darrell's hand—her first fervent blessing—her after words, simple but eloquent with feeling—made that heart so transparent, that Darrell looked it through with respectful eyes.

Mrs. Haughton was still a pretty woman, and with much of that delicacy of form and outline which constitutes the gentility of person. She had a sweet voice too, except when angry. Her defects of education, of temper, or of conventional polish, were not discernible in the overflow of natural emotion. Darrell had come resolved to be pleased, if possible. Pleased he was, much more than he had expected. He even inly accepted for the deceased Captain excuses which he had never before admitted to himself. The linen-draper's daughter was no coarse presuming dowdy, and in her candid rush of gratitude there was not that underbred servility which Darrell had thought perceptible in her epistolary compositions. There was elegance too, void both of gaudy ostentation and penurious thrift, in the furniture and arrangements of the room. The income he gave to her was not spent with slatternly waste or on tawdry gewgaws. To ladies in general, Darrell's manner was extremely attractive—not the less winning because of a certain gentle shyness which, implying respect for those he addressed, and a modest undervaluing of his own merit, conveyed compliment and soothed self-love. And to that lady in especial such gentle shyness was the happiest good-breeding.

In short, all went off without a hitch, till, as Darrell was taking leave, Mrs. Haughton was reminded by some evil genius of her evening party, and her very gratitude, longing for some opportunity to requite obligation, prompted her to invite the kind man to whom the facility of giving parties was justly due. She had never realized to herself, despite all that Lionel could say, the idea of Darrell's station in the world—a lawyer who had spent his youth at the back of Holborn, whom the stylish Captain had deemed it a condescension not to cut, might indeed become very rich; but he could never be the fashion. "Poor man," she thought, "he must be very lonely. He is not, like Lionel, a young dancing man. A quiet little party, with people of his own early rank and habits, would be more in his way than those grand places to which Lionel goes. I can but ask him—I ought to ask him. What would he say if I did not ask him? Black ingratitude indeed, if he were not asked!" All these ideas rushed through her mind in a breath, and as she clasped Darrell's extended hand in both her own, she said—"I have a little party to-night!" And paused—Darrell remaining mute, and Lionel not suspecting what was to ensue, she continued: "There may be some good music—young friends of mine—sing charmingly—Italian!"

Darrell bowed. Lionel began to shudder.

"And if I might presume to think it would amuse you, Mr. Darrell, oh, I should be so happy to see you!—so happy!"

"Would you?" said Darrell, briefly. "Then I should be a churl if I did not come. Lionel will escort me. Of course, you expect him too."

"Yes, indeed. Though *he* has so many fine places to go to—and it can't be exactly what he is used to—yet he is such a dear good boy that he gives up all to gratify his mother."

Lionel, in agonies, turned an unfilial back, and looked steadily out of the window; but Darrell, far too august to take offense where none was meant, only smiled at the implied reference to Lionel's superior demand in the fashionable world, and replied, without even a touch of his accustomed irony—"And to gratify his mother is a pleasure I thank you for inviting me to share with him."

More and more at her ease, and charmed with having obeyed her hospitable impulse, Mrs. Haughton, following Darrell to the landing-place, added—

"And if you like to play a quiet rubber—"

"I never touch cards. I abhor the very name of them, ma'am," interrupted Darrell, somewhat less gracious in his tones.

He mounted his horse; and Lionel, breaking from Mrs. Haughton, who was assuring him that Mr. Darrell was not at all what she expected, but really quite the gentleman—nay, a much grander gentleman than even Colonel Morley—regained his kinsman's side, looking abashed and discomfited. Darrell, with the kindness which his fine quick intellect enabled him so felicitously to apply, hastened to relieve the young guardsman's mind.

"I like your mother much—very much," said he, in his most melodious accents. "Good boy! I see now why you gave up Lady Dulcett. Go and take a canter by yourself, or with younger friends, and be sure that you call on me, so that we may be both at Mrs. Haughton's by ten o'clock. I can go later to the concert if I feel inclined."

He waved his hand, wheeled his horse, and trotted off toward the fair suburban lanes that still proffer to the denizens of London glimpses of rural fields, and shadows from quiet hedgerows. He wished to be alone; the sight of Mrs. Haughton had revived recollections of bygone days—memory linking memory in painful chain—gay talk with his younger school-fellow—that wild Charlie now in his grave—his own laborious youth, resolute aspirings, secret sorrows—and the strong man felt the want of that solitary self-commune, without which self-conquest is unattainable.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Haughton at home miscellaneously. Little parties are useful in bringing people together. One never knows whom one may meet.

GREAT kingdoms grow out of small beginnings. Mrs. Haughton's social circle was described from a humble centre. On coming into possession of her easy income, and her house in Gloucester Place, she was naturally seized with the desire of an appropriate "visiting acquaintance." The accomplishment of that desire had been deferred a while by the excitement of Lionel's departure for Paris, and the IMMENSE TEMPTATION to which the attentions of the spurious Mr. Courtenay Smith had exposed her widowed solitude; but no sooner had she recovered from the shame and anger with which she had discarded that showy impostor, happily

in time, than the desire became the more keen; because the good lady felt that, with a mind so active and restless as hers, a visiting acquaintance might be her best preservative from that sense of loneliness which disposes widows to lend the incautious ear to adventurous wooers. After her experience of her own weakness in listening to a sharper, and with a shudder at her escape, Mrs. Haughton made a firm resolve never to give her beloved son a father-in-law. No, she would distract her thoughts—she would have a VISITING ACQUAINTANCE. She commenced by singling out such families as at various times had been her genteelest lodgers—now lodging elsewhere. She informed them by polite notes of her accession of consequence and fortune, which she was sure they would be happy to hear; and these notes, left with the card of "Mrs. Houghton, Gloucester Place," necessarily produced respondent notes and correspondent cards. Gloucester Place then prepared itself for a party. The *ci-devant* lodgers urbanely attended the summons. In their turn they gave parties. Mrs. Haughton was invited. From each such party she bore back a new draught into her "social circle." Thus, long before the end of five years, Mrs. Haughton had attained her object. She had a "VISITING ACQUAINTANCE!" It is true that she was not particular; so that there was a new somebody at whose house a card could be left, or a morning call achieved—who could help to fill her rooms, or whose rooms she could contribute to fill in turn, she was contented. She was no tuft-hunter. She did not care for titles. She had no visions of a column in the *Morning Post*. She wanted, kind lady, only a vent for the exuberance of her social instincts; and being proud, she rather liked acquaintances who looked up to, instead of looking down on her. Thus Gloucester Place was invaded by tribes not congenial to its natural civilized atmosphere. Hengists and Horsas, from remote Anglo-Saxon districts, crossed the intervening channel, and insulted the British nationality of that salubrious district. To most of such immigrators Mrs. Haughton, of Gloucester Place, was a personage of the highest distinction. A few others of prouder status in the world, though they owned to themselves that there was a sad mixture at Mrs. Haughton's house, still, once seduced there, came again—being persons who, however independent in fortune, or gentle by blood, had but a small "visiting acquaintance" in town; fresh from economical colonization on the Continent, or from distant provinces in these three kingdoms. Mrs. Haughton's rooms were well lighted. There was music for some, whist for others, tea, ices, cakes, and a crowd for all.

At ten o'clock—the rooms already nearly filled, and Mrs. Haughton, as she stood at the door, anticipating with joy that happy hour when the stair-case would become inaccessible—the head attendant, sent with the ices from the neighboring confectioner, announced, in a loud voice, "Mr. Haughton—Mr. Darrell."

At that latter name a sensation thrilled the assembly—the name so much in every one's mouth at that period, nor least in the mouths of the great middle class, on whom—though the polite may call them "a sad mixture," cabinets depend—could not fail to be familiar to the ears of Mrs. Haughton's "visiting acquaintance." The interval between his announcement and his ascent from the hall to the drawing-room was busily filled up by murmured questions to the smiling hostess, "Darrell! what! *the* Darrell! Guy Darrell! greatest man of the day! A connection of yours? Bless me, you don't say so?" Mrs. Haughton began to feel nervous. Was Lionel right? Could the man who had only been a lawyer at the back of Holborn really be, now, such a very, very great man — greatest man of the day? Nonsense!

"Ma'am"—said one pale, puff-cheeked, flat-nosed gentleman, in a very large white waistcoat, who was waiting by her side till a vacancy in one of the two whist-tables should occur—"Ma'am, I'm an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Darrell. You say he is a connection of yours? Present me to him."

Mrs. Haughton nodded flutteringly, for, as the gentleman closed his request, and tapped a large gold snuff-box, Darrell stood before her—Lionel close at his side, looking positively sheepish. The great man said a few civil words, and was gliding into the room to make way for the press behind him, when he of the white waistcoat, touching Mrs. Haughton's arm, and staring Darrell full in the face, said, very loud: "In these anxious times public men dispense with ceremony. I crave an introduction to Mr. Darrell." Thus pressed, poor Mrs. Haughton, without looking up, muttered out, "Mr. Adolphus Poole—Mr. Darrell," and turned to welcome fresh comers.

"Mr. Darrell," said Mr. Poole, bowing to the ground, "this *is* an honor."

Darrell gave the speaker one glance of his keen eye, and thought to himself—"If I were still at the bar, I should be sorry to hold a brief for that fellow." However, he returned the bow formally, and, bowing again at the close of a highly complimentary address with which Mr. Poole followed up his opening sentence, expressed himself "much flattered," and thought he had escaped; but wherever he went through the crowd, Mr. Poole contrived to follow him, and claim his notice by remarks on the affairs of the day—the weather—the funds—the crops. At length Darrell perceived, sitting aloof in a corner, an excellent man, whom indeed it surprised him to see in a London drawing-room, but who, many years ago, when Darrell was canvassing the enlightened constituency of Ouzelford, had been on a visit to the chairman of his committee—an influential trader—and having connections in the town—and, being a very high character, had done him good service in the canvass. Darrell rarely forgot a face, and never a service. At any time he would have been glad to see the worthy man once more, but at that time he was grateful indeed.

"Excuse me," he said, bluntly, to Mr. Poole; "but I see an old friend." He moved on, and thick as the crowd had become, it made way with respect, as to royalty, for the distinguished orator. The buzz of admiration as he passed—louder than in drawing-rooms more refined—would have had sweeter music than Grisi's most artful quaver to a vainer man—nay, once on a time to him. But—sugar-plums come too late! He gained the corner, and roused the solitary sitter.

"My dear Mr. Hartopp, do you not remember me—Guy Darrell?"

"Mr. Darrell!" cried the ex-mayor of Gatesboro' rising, "who could think that you would remember *me?*"

"What! not remember those ten stubborn voters, on whom, all and singly, I had lavished my powers of argument in vain? You came, and with the brief words, 'John—Ned—Dick—oblige me—vote for Darrell!' the men were convinced—the votes won. That's what I call eloquence"—(*sotto voce*—"Confound that fellow! still after me!"—Aside to Hartopp)—"Oh! may I ask who is that Mr.—what's his name—there—in the white waistcoat?"

"Poole," answered Hartopp. "Who is he, Sir? A speculative man. He is connected with a new Company—I am told it answers. Williams (that's my foreman—a very long head he has too) has taken shares in the Company, and wanted me to do the same, but 'tis not in my way. And Mr. Poole may be a very honest man, but he does not impress me with that idea. I have grown careless; I know I am liable to be taken in—I was so once—and therefore I avoid 'Companies' upon principle—especially when they promise thirty per cent., and work copper mines—Mr. Poole has a copper mine."

"And deals in brass—you may see it in his face! But you are not in town for good, Mr. Hartopp? If I remember right, you were settled at Gatesboro' when we last met."

"And so I am still—or rather in the neighborhood. I am gradually retiring from business, and grown more and more fond of farming. But I have a family, and we live in enlightened times, when children require a finer education than their parents had. Mrs. Hartopp thought my daughter Anna Maria was in need of some 'finishing lessons'—very fond of the harp is Anna Maria—and so we have taken a house in London for six weeks. That's Mrs. Hartopp yonder, with the bird on her head—bird of paradise, I believe—Williams says that birds of that kind never rest. That bird is an exception—it has rested on Mrs. Hartopp's head for hours together, every evening since we have been in town."

"Significant of your connubial felicity, Mr. Hartopp."

"May it be so of Anna Maria's. She is to be married when her education is finished—married, by-the-by, to a son of your old friend Jessop, of Ouzelford—and between you and me, Mr. Darrell, that is the reason why I consented to come to town. Do not suppose that I would have a daughter finished unless there was a husband at hand who undertook to be responsible for the results."

"You retain your wisdom, Mr. Hartopp; and I feel sure that not even your fair partner could have brought you up to London unless you had decided on the expediency of coming. Do you remember that I told you the day you so admirably settled a dispute in our committee-room, 'It was well you were not born a king, for you would have been an irresistible tyrant.'"

"Hush! hush!" whispered Hartopp in great alarm, "if Mrs. Hartopp should hear you! What an observer you are, Sir! I thought *I* was a judge of character—but I was once deceived. I dare say you never were."

"You mistake," answered Darrell, wincing, "*you* deceived! How?"

"Oh, a long story, Sir. It was an elderly man—the most agreeable, interesting companion—a vagabond nevertheless—and such a pretty bewitching little girl with him, his grandchild. I thought he might have been a wild harum-scarum chap in his day, but that he had a true sense of honor"—(Darrell, wholly uninterested in this narrative, suppressed a yawn, and wondered when it would end). "Only think, Sir, just as I was saying to myself, 'I know character—I never was taken in,' down comes a smart fellow—the man's own son—and tells me—or rather he suffers a lady who comes with him to tell me—that this charming old gentleman of high sense of honor was a returned convict—been transported for robbing his employer."

Pale, breathless, Darrell listened, not unheeding now. "What was the name of—of—"

"The convict? He called himself Chapman, but the son's name was Losely—Jasper."

"Ah!" faltered Darrell, recoiling, "and you spoke of a little girl?"

"Jasper Losely's daughter; he came after her with a magistrate's warrant. The old miscreant had carried her off, to teach her his own swindling ways, I suppose. Luckily she was then in my charge. I gave her back to her father, and the very respectable-looking lady he brought with him. Some relation, I presume?"

"What was her name, do you remember?"

"Crane."

"Crane! Crane!" muttered Darrell, as if trying in vain to tax his memory with that name. "So he said the child was his daughter—are you sure?"

"Oh, of course he said so, and the lady too. But can you be acquainted with them, Sir?"

"I? no! Strangers to me except by repute. Liars—infamous liars! But have the accomplices quarreled—I mean the son and father—that the father should be exposed and denounced by the son?"

"I conclude so. I never saw them again. But you believe the father really was, then, a felon, a convict—no excuse for him—no extenuating circumstances? There was something in that man, Mr. Darrell, that made one love him—positively love him; and when I had to tell him that I had given up the child he trusted to my charge, and saw his grief, I felt a criminal myself."

Darrell said nothing, but the character of his face was entirely altered—stern, hard, relentless—the face of an inexorable judge. Hartopp, lifting his eyes suddenly to that countenance, recoiled in awe.

"You think I was a criminal!" he said, piteously.

"I think we are both talking too much, Mr. Hartopp, of a gang of miserable swindlers, and I advise you to dismiss the whole remembrance of intercourse with any of them from your honest breast, and never to repeat to other ears the tale you have poured into mine. Men of honor should crush down the very thought that approaches them to knaves!"

Thus saying, Darrell moved off with abrupt rudeness, and passing quickly back through the crowd, scarcely noticed Mrs. Haughton by a retreating nod, nor heeded Lionel at all, but hur-

ried down the stairs. He was impatiently searching for his cloak in the back parlor, when a voice behind said, "Let me assist you, Sir—do;" and turning round with petulant quickness, he beheld again Mr. Adolphus Poole. It requires an habitual intercourse with equals to give perfect and invariable control of temper to a man of irritable nerves and frank character; and though, where Darrell really liked, he had much sweet forbearance, and where he was indifferent, much stately courtesy, yet, when he was offended, he could be extremely uncivil. "Sir," he cried, almost stamping his foot, "your importunities annoy me; I request you to cease them."

"Oh! I ask your pardon," said Mr. Poole, with an angry growl. "I have no need to force myself on any man. But I beg you to believe that if I presumed to seek your acquaintance, it was to do you a service, Sir—yes, a private service, Sir." He lowered his voice into a whisper, and laid his finger on his nose—"There's one Jasper Losely, Sir—eh? Oh, Sir, I'm no mischief-maker. I respect family secrets. Perhaps I might be of use, perhaps not."

"Certainly not to me, Sir," said Darrell, flinging the cloak he had now found across his shoulders, and striding from the house. When he entered his carriage, the footman stood waiting for orders. Darrell was long in giving them. "Any where for half an hour—to St. Paul's, then home."

But on returning from this objectless plunge into the city, Darrell pulled the check-string—"To Belgrave Square—Lady Dulcett's."

The concert was half over; but Flora Vyvyan had still guarded, as she had promised, a seat beside herself for Darrell, by lending it for the present to one of her obedient vassals. Her face brightened as she saw Darrell enter and approach. The vassal surrendered the chair. Darrell appeared to be in the highest spirits; and I firmly believe that he was striving to the utmost in his power—what?—to make himself agreeable to Flora Vyvyan? No; to make Flora Vyvyan agreeable to himself. The man did not presume that a fair young lady could be in love with him; perhaps he believed *that*, at his years, to be impossible. But he asked what seemed much easier, and was much harder—he asked to be himself in love.

CHAPTER V.

It is asserted by those learned men who have devoted their lives to the study of the manners and habits of insect society, that when a spider has lost its last web, having exhausted all the glutinous matter wherewith to spin another, it still protracts its innocent existence by obtruding its nippers on some less warlike but more respectable spider, possessed of a convenient home and an airy larder. Observant moralists have noticed the same peculiarity in the Man-Eater, or Pocket-Cannibal.

Eleven o'clock A.M. Samuel Adolphus Poole, Esq., is in his parlor—the house one of those new dwellings which yearly spring up north of the Regent's Park—dwellings that, attesting the eccentricity of the national character, task the fancy of the architect and the gravity of the beholder—each tenement so tortured into contrast with the other, that, on one little rood of ground, all ages seem blended, and all races encamped. No. 1 is an Egyptian tomb!—Pharaohs may repose there! No. 2 is a Swiss *chalet*—William Tell may be shooting in its garden! Lo! the severity of Doric columns—Sparta is before you! Behold that Gothic porch—you are rapt to the Norman days! Ha! those Elizabethan mullions Sidney and Raleigh, rise again! Ho! the trellises of China—come forth, Confucius and Commissioner Yeh! Passing a few paces, we are in the land of the Zegri and Abencerage—

"Land of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor."

Mr. Poole's house is called Alhambra Villa! Moorish verandas—plate-glass windows, with cusped heads and mahogany sashes—a garden behind, a smaller one in front—stairs ascending to the door-way under a Saracenic portico, between two pedestaled lions that resemble poodles—the whole new and lustrous—in semblance stone, in substance stucco—cracks in the stucco denoting "settlements." But the house being let for ninety-nine years—relet again on a running lease of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one—the builder is not answerable for duration, nor the original lessee for repairs. Take it altogether, than Alhambra Villa masonry could devise no better type of modern taste and metropolitan speculation.

Mr. Poole, since we saw him, between four and five years ago, has entered the matrimonial state. He has married a lady of some money, and become a reformed man. He has eschewed the turf, relinquished belcher neckcloths and Newmarket coats—dropped his old bachelor acquaintances. When a man marries and reforms—especially when marriage and reform are accompanied with increased income, and settled respectably in Alhambra Villa—relations, before estranged, tender kindly overtures; the world, before austere, becomes indulgent. It was so with Poole—no longer Dolly. Grant that in earlier life he had fallen into bad ways, and, among equivocal associates, he had been led on by that taste for sporting which is a manly though a perilous characteristic of the true-born Englishman. He who loves horses is liable to come in contact with blacklegs. The racer is a noble animal; but it is his misfortune that the better his breeding the worse his company. Grant that in the stables Adolphus Samuel Poole had picked up some wild oats—he had sown them now. Bygones were by-gones. He had made a very prudent marriage. Mrs. Poole was a sensible woman—had rendered him domestic, and would keep him straight! His uncle Samuel, a most worthy man, had found him that sensible woman, and, having found her, had paid his nephew's debts, and adding a round sum to the lady's fortune, had seen that the whole was so tightly settled on wife and children that Poole had the tender satisfaction of knowing that, happen what might to himself, those dear ones were safe; nay, that if, in the reverses of fortune, he should be compelled by persecuting creditors to fly his native shores, law could not impair the competence it had settled upon Mrs. Poole, nor destroy her blessed privilege to share that competence with a beloved spouse. Insolvency itself, thus protected by a marriage-settlement, realizes the sublime security of virtue immortalized by the Roman Muse:

——"Repulsæ nescia sordidæ,
Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ."

Mr. Poole was an active man in the parish vestry—he was a sound politician—he subscribed to public charities—he attended public dinners—he had votes in half a dozen public institutions—he talked of the public interests, and called himself a public man. He chose his associates among gentlemen in business—speculative, it is true, but steady. A joint-stock company was set up; he obtained an official station at its board, coupled with a salary—not large, indeed, but still a salary.

"The money," said Adolphus Samuel Poole, "is not my object; but I like to have something to do." I can not say how he did something, but no doubt somebody was done.

Mr. Poole was in his parlor, reading letters and sorting papers, before he departed to his office in the West End. Mrs. Poole entered, leading an infant who had not yet learned to walk alone, and denoting, by an interesting enlargement of shape, a kindly design to bless that infant, at no distant period, with a brother or sister, as the case might be.

"Come and kiss Pa, Johnny," said she to the infant.

"Mrs. Poole, I am busy," growled Pa.

"Pa's busy—working hard for little Johnny. Johnny will be the better for it some day," said Mrs. Poole, tossing the infant half up to the ceiling, in compensation for the loss of the paternal kiss.

"Mrs. Poole, what do you want?"

"May I hire Jones's brougham for two hours to-day to pay visits? There are a great many cards we ought to leave; is there any place where I should leave a card for you, lovey—any person of consequence you were introduced to at Mrs. Haughton's last night? That great man they were all talking about, to whom you seemed to take such a fancy, Samuel, duck—"

"Do get out! that man insulted me, I tell you."

"Insulted you! No; you never told me."

"I did tell you last night coming home."

"Dear me, I thought you meant that Mr. Hartopp."

"Well, *he* almost insulted me, too. Mrs. Poole, you are stupid and disagreeable. Is that all you have to say?"

"Pa's cross, Johnny dear! poor Pa!—people have vexed Pa, Johnny—naughty people. We must go, or we shall vex him too."

Such heavenly sweetness on the part of a forbearing wife would have softened Tamburlane. Poole's sullen brow relaxed. If women knew how to treat men, not a husband, unhenpecked, would be found from Indos to the Pole! And Poole, for all his surly demeanor, was as completely governed by that angel as a bear by his keeper.

"Well, Mrs. Poole, excuse me. I own I am out of sorts to-day—give me little Johnny—there (kissing the infant, who in return makes a dig at Pa's left eye, and begins to cry on finding that he has not succeeded in digging it out)—take the brougham. Hush, Johnny—hush—and you may leave a card for me at Mr. Peckham's, Harley Street. My eye smarts horribly; that baby will gouge me one of these days."

Mrs. Poole has succeeded in stilling the infant, and confessing that Johnny's fingers are extremely strong for his age—but, adding, that babies will catch at whatever is very bright and beautiful, such as gold and jewels, and Mr. Poole's eyes, administers to the wounded orb so soothing a lotion of pity and admiration that Poole growls out quite mildly—"Nonsense, blarney—by-the-by, I did not say this morning that you should not have the rosewood chiffoniere."

"No, you said you could not afford it, duck; and when Pa says he can't afford it, Pa must be the judge—must not he, Johnny dear?"

"But, perhaps, I can afford it. Yes, you may have it—yes, I say, you *shall* have it. Don't forget to leave that card on Peckham—he's a moneyed man. There's a ring at the bell, who is it? Run and see."

Mrs. Poole obeyed with great activity, considering her interesting condition. She came back in half a minute.

"Oh, my Adolphus! oh, my Samuel! it is that dreadful-looking man who was here the other evening—staid with you so long. I don't like his looks at all. Pray, don't be at home."

"I must," said Poole, turning a shade paler, if that were possible. "Stop—don't let that girl go to the door, and you leave me." He snatched his hat and gloves, and putting aside the parlor maid, who had emerged from the shades below in order to answer the 'ring,' walked hastily down the small garden.

Jasper Losely was stationed at the little gate. Jasper was no longer in rags, but he was coarsely clad—clad as if he had resigned all pretense to please a lady's eye, or to impose upon a West-End tradesman—a check shirt—a rough pea-jacket, his hands buried in its pockets.

Poole started with well-simulated surprise. "What, you! I am just going to my office—in a great hurry at present."

"Hurry or not, I must and will speak to you," said Jasper, doggedly.

"What now? then, step in;—only remember I can't give you more than five minutes."

The rude visitor followed Poole into the back parlor, and closed the door after him.

Leaning his arms over a chair, his hat still on his head, Losely fixed his fierce eyes on his old friend, and said in a low, set, determined voice—"Now, mark me, Dolly Poole, if you think to shirk my business, or throw me over, you'll find yourself in Queer Street. Have you called on Guy Darrell, and put my case to him, or have you not?"

"I met Mr. Darrell only last night, at a very genteel party. (Poole deemed it prudent not to say by whom that genteel party was given, for it will be remembered that Poole had been Jasper's confidant in that adventurer's former designs upon Mrs. Haughton; and if Jasper knew that Poole had made her acquaintance, might he not insist upon Poole's reintroducing him as a visiting acquaintance?) "A very genteel party," repeated Poole. "I made a point of being presented to Mr. Darrell, and very polite he was at first."

"Curse his politeness—get to the point."

"I sounded my way very carefully, as you may suppose; and when I had got him into

friendly chat, you understand, I began: Ah! my poor Losely, nothing to be done *there*—he flew off in a tangent—as much as desired me to mind my own business, and hold my tongue; and upon my life, I don't think there is a chance for you in that quarter."

"Very well—we shall see. Next, have you taken any steps to find out the girl, my daughter?"

"I have, I assure you. But you give me so slight a clew. Are you quite sure she is not in America after all?"

"I have told you before that that story about America was all bosh! a stratagem of the old gentleman's to deceive me. Poor old man," continued Jasper, in a tone that positively betrayed feeling—"I don't wonder that he dreads and flies me; yet I would not hurt him more than I have done, even to be as well off as you are—blinking at me from your mahogany perch like a pet owl with its crop full of mice. And if I would take the girl from him, it is for her own good. For if Darrell could be got to make a provision on her, and, through her, on myself, why, of course, the old man should share the benefit of it. And now that these infernal pains often keep me awake half the night, I can't always shut out the idea of that old man wandering about the world, and dying in a ditch. And that runaway girl—to whom, I dare swear, he would give away his last crumb of bread—ought to be an annuity to us both: Basta, basta! As to the American story—I had a friend at Paris, who went to America on a speculation; I asked him to inquire about this William Waife and his grand-daughter Sophy, who were said to have sailed for New York nearly five years ago, and he saw the very persons—settled in New York—no longer under the name of Waife, but their true name of Simpson, and got out from the man that they had been induced to take their passage from England in the name of Waife, at the request of a person whom the man would not give up, but to whom he said he was under obligations. Perhaps the old gentleman had done the fellow a kind turn in early life. The description of this *soi disant* Waife and his grandchild settles the matter;—wholly unlike those I seek; so that there is every reason to suppose they must still be in England, and it is your business to find them. Continue your search—quicken your wits—let me be better pleased with your success when I call again this day week—and meanwhile four pounds, if you please—as much more as you like."

"Why, I gave you four pounds the other day, besides six pounds for clothes; it can't be gone."

"Every penny."

"Dear, dear! can't you maintain yourself anyhow? Can't you get any one to play at cards? Four pounds! Why, with your talent for whist, four pounds are a capital?"

"Whom can I play with? Whom can I herd with?—Cracksmen and pickpockets. Fit me out; ask me to your own house; invite your own friends; make up a rubber, and you will then see what I can do with four pounds; and may go shares if you like, as we used to do."

"Don't talk so loud. Losely, you know very well that what you ask is impossible. I've turned over a new leaf."

"But I've still got your handwriting on the old leaf."

"What's the good of these stupid threats? If you really wanted to do me a mischief, where could you go to, and who'd believe you?"

"I fancy your wife would. I'll try. Hillo—"

"Stop—stop—stop. No row here, Sir. No scandal. Hold your tongue, or I'll send for the police."

"Do! Nothing I should like better. I'm tired out. I want to tell my own story at the Old Bailey, and have my revenge upon you, upon Darrell, upon all. Send for the police."

Losely threw himself at length on the sofa—(new morocco, with spring cushions)—and folded his arms.

"You could only give me five minutes—they are gone, I fear. I am more liberal. I give you your own time to consider. I don't care if I stay to dine; I dare say Mrs. Poole will excuse my dress."

"Losely, you are such a—fellow! If I do give you the four pounds you ask, will you promise to shift for yourself somehow, and molest me no more?"

"Certainly not. I shall come once every week for the same sum. I can't live upon less—until—"

"Until what?"

"Until either you get Mr. Darrell to settle on me a suitable provision, or until you place me in possession of my daughter, and I can then be in a better condition to treat with him myself; for if I would make a claim on account of the girl, I must produce the girl, or he may say she is dead. Besides, if she be as pretty as she was when a child, the very sight of her might move him more than all my talk."

"And if I succeed in doing any thing with Mr. Darrell, or discovering your daughter, you will give up all such letters and documents of mine as you say you possess?"

"'Say—I possess!' I have shown them to you in this pocket-book. Dolly Poole—your own proposition to rob old Latham's safe."

Poole eyed the book, which the ruffian took out and tapped. Had the ruffian been a slighter man, Poole would have been a braver one. As it was—he eyed and groaned. "Turn against one's old crony! So unhandsome, so unlike what I thought you were!"

"It is you who would turn against me. But stick to Darrell, or find me my daughter, and help her and me to get justice out of him; and you shall not only have back these letters, but I'll pay you handsomely—handsomely, Dolly Poole. Zooks, Sir—I am fallen—but I am always a gentleman."

Therewith Losely gave a vehement slap to his hat, which, crushed by the stroke, improved his general appearance into an aspect so outrageously raffish, that but for the expression of his countenance the contrast between the boast and the man would have been ludicrous even to Mr. Poole. The countenance was too dark to permit laughter. In the dress, but the ruin of fortune—in the face, the ruin of man.

Poole heaved a deep sigh, and extended four sovereigns. Losely rose and took them carelessly. "This day week," he said—shook himself—and went his way.

CHAPTER VI.

French touches to the Three Vignettes for the Book of Beauty.

Weeks passed—the London season was beginning—Darrell had decided nothing—the prestige of his position was undiminished—in politics, perhaps, higher. He had succeeded in reconciling some great men; he had strengthened, it might be saved, a jarring cabinet. In all this he had shown admirable knowledge of mankind, and proved that time and disuse had not lessened his powers of perception. In his matrimonial designs Darrell seemed more bent than ever upon the hazard—irresolute as ever on the choice of a partner. Still the choice appeared to be circumscribed to the fair three who had been subjected to Colonel Morley's speculative criticism—Lady Adela, Miss Vipont, Flora Vyvyan. Much *pro* and *con* might be said in respect to each. Lady Adela was so handsome that it was a pleasure to look at her; and that is much when one sees the handsome face every day—provided the pleasure does not wear off. She had the reputation of a very good temper; and the expression of her countenance confirmed it. There, panegyric stopped; but detraction did not commence. What remained was inoffensive commonplace. She had no salient attribute, and no ruling passion. Certainly she would never have wasted a thought on Mr. Darrell, nor have discovered a single merit in him, if he had not been quoted as a very rich man of high character in search of a wife; and if her father had not said to her—"Adela, Mr. Darrell has been greatly struck with your appearance—he told me so. He is not young, but he is still a very fine-looking man, and you are twenty-seven. 'Tis a greater distinction to be noticed by a person of his years and position than by a pack of silly young fellows, who think more of their own pretty faces than they would ever do of yours. If you did not mind a little disparity of years, he would make you a happy wife; and, in the course of nature, a widow, not too old to enjoy liberty, and with a jointure that might entitle you to a still better match."

Darrell, thus put into Lady Adela's head, he remained there, and became an *idèe fixe*. Viewed in the light of a probable husband, he was elevated into an "interesting man." She would have received his addresses with gentle complacency; and, being more the creature of habit than impulse, would, no doubt, in the intimacy of connubial life, have blessed him, or any other admiring husband, with a reasonable modicum of languid affection. Nevertheless, Lady Adela was an unconscious impostor; for, owing to a mild softness of eye and a susceptibility to blushes, a victim ensnared by her beauty would be apt to give her credit for a nature far more accessible to the romance of the tender passions, than, happily perhaps for her own peace of mind, she possessed; and might flatter himself that he had produced a sensation which gave that softness to the eye, and that damask to the blush.

Honoria Vipont would have been a choice far more creditable to the good sense of so mature a wooer. Few better specimens of a young lady brought up to become an accomplished woman of the world. She had sufficient instruction to be the companion of an ambitious man—solid judgment to fit her for his occasional adviser. She could preside with dignity over a stately household—receive with grace distinguished guests. Fitted to administer an ample fortune, ample fortune was necessary to the development of her excellent qualities. If a man of Darrell's age were bold enough to marry a young wife, a safer wife among the young ladies of London he could scarcely find; for though Honoria was only three-and-twenty, she was as staid, as sensible, and as remote from all girlish frivolities as if she had been eight-and-thirty. Certainly, had Guy Darrell been of her own years, his fortune unmade, his fame to win, a lawyer residing at the back of Holborn, or a petty squire in the petty demesnes of Fawley, he would have had no charm in the eyes of Honoria Vipont. Disparity of years was in this case not his drawback but his advantage, since to that disparity Darrell owed the established name and the eminent station which made Honoria think she elevated her own self in preferring him. It is but justice to her to distinguish here between a woman's veneration for the attributes of respect which a man gathers round him, and the more vulgar sentiment which sinks the man altogether, except as the necessary fixture to be taken in with the general valuation. It is not fair to ask if a girl who entertains a preference for one of our toiling, stirring, ambitious sex, who may be double her age, or have a snub nose, but who looks dignified and imposing on a pedestal of state, whether she would like him as much if stripped of all his accessories, and left unredeemed to his baptismal register or unbecoming nose. Just as well ask a girl in love with a young Lotharia if she would like him as much if he had been ugly and crooked. The high name of the one man is as much a part of him as good looks are to the other. Thus, though it was said of Madame de la Vallière that she loved Louis XIV. for himself and not for his regal grandeur, is there a woman in the world, however disinterested, who believes that Madame de la Villière would have liked Louis XIV. as much if Louis XIV. had been Mr. John Jones! Honoria would not have bestowed her hand on a brainless, worthless nobleman, whatever his rank or wealth. She was above that sort of ambition; but neither would she have married the best-looking and worthiest John Jones who ever bore that British appellation, if he had not occupied the social position which brought the merits of a Jones within range of the eye-glass of a Vipont.

Many girls in the nursery say to their juvenile confidants, "I will only marry the man I love." Honoria had ever said, "I will only marry the man I respect." Thus it was her respect for Guy Darrell that made her honor him by her preference. She appreciated his intellect—she fell in love with the reputation which the intellect had acquired. And Darrell might certainly choose worse. His cool reason inclined him much to Honoria. When Alban Morley argued in her favor he had no escape from acquiescence, except in the turns and doubles of his ironical humor. But his heart was a rebel to his reason; and between you and me, Honoria was exactly one of those young women by whom a man of grave years ought to be attracted, and by whom, somehow or other,

he never is; I suspect, because the older we grow the more we love youthfulness of character. When Alcides, having gone through all the fatigues of life, took a bride in Olympus, he ought to have selected Minerva, but he chose Hebe.

Will Darrell find his Hebe in Flora Vyvyan? Alban Morley became more and more alarmed by that apprehension. He was shrewd enough to recognize in her the girl of all others formed to glad the eye and plague the heart of a grave and reverend seigneur. And it might well not only flatter the vanity, but beguile the judgment, of a man who feared his hand would be accepted only for the sake of his money, that Flora, just at this moment, refused the greatest match in the kingdom—young Lord Vipont, son of the new Earl of Montfort — a young man of good sense, high character, well-looking as men go, heir to estates almost royal — a young man whom no girl on earth is justified in refusing. But would the whimsical creature accept Darrell? Was she not merely making sport of him, and if, caught by her arts, he, sage and elder, solemnly offered homage and hand to that *belle dedaigneuse* who had just doomed to despair a comely young magnate with five times his fortune, would she not hasten to make him the ridicule of London?

Darrell had, perhaps, his secret reasons for thinking otherwise, but he did not confide them even to Alban Morley. This much only will the narrator, more candid, say to the reader—if out of the three whom his thoughts fluttered round, Guy Darrell wished to select the one who would love him best — love him with the whole, fresh, unreasoning heart of a girl whose childish frowardness sprung from childlike innocence — let him dare the hazard of refusal and of ridicule; let him say to Flora Vyvyan, in the pathos of his sweet, deep voice, "Come, and be the spoiled darling of my gladdened age; let my life, ere it sink into night, be rejoiced by the bloom and fresh breeze of the morning!"

But to say it he must wish it; he himself must love—love with all the lavish indulgence, all the knightly tenderness, all the grateful sympathizing joy in the youth of the beloved, when youth for the lover is no more, which alone can realize what we sometimes see, though loth to own it—congenial unions with unequal years. If Darrell feel not that love, woe to him; woe and thrice shame if he allure to his hearth one who might indeed be a Hebe to the spouse who gave up to her his whole heart in return for hers; but to the spouse who had no heart to give, or gave but the chips of it, the Hebe, indignant, would be worse than Erinnys!

All things considered, then, they who wish well to Guy Darrell must range with Alban Morley in favor of Miss Honoria Vipont. She proffering affectionate respect, Darrell responding by rational esteem. So, perhaps, Darrell himself thought; for whenever Miss Vipont was named he became more taciturn, more absorbed in reflection, and sighed heavily, like a man who slowly makes up his mind to a decision, wise but not tempting.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing much of that information which the wisest men in the world could not give, but which the Author can.

"Darrell," said Colonel Morley, "you remember my nephew George as a boy? He is now the rector of Humberston; married — a very nice sort of woman — suits him. Humberston is a fine living; but his talents are wasted there. He preached for the first time in London last year, and made a considerable sensation. This year he has been much out of town. He has no church here as yet. I hope to get him one. Carr is determined that he shall be a Bishop. Meanwhile he preaches at —— Chapel to-morrow. Come and hear him with me, and then tell me frankly — is he eloquent or not?"

Darrell had a prejudice against fashionable preachers, but to please Colonel Morley he went to hear George. He was agreeably surprised by the pulpit oratory of the young divine. It had that rare combination of impassioned earnestness, with subdued tones, and decorous gesture, which suits the ideal of ecclesiastical eloquence conceived by an educated English Churchman—

"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Occasionally the old defect in utterance was discernible; there was a gasp as for breath, or a prolonged dwelling upon certain syllables, which, occurring in the most animated passages, and apparently evincing the preacher's struggle with emotion, rather served to heighten the sympathy of the audience. But for the most part the original stammer was replaced by a felicitous pause—the pause as of a thoughtful reasoner, or a solemn monitor knitting ideas, that came too quick, into method, or chastening impulse into disciplined zeal. The mind of the preacher, thus not only freed from trammel, but armed for victory, came forth with that power which is peculiar to an original intellect — the power which suggests more than it demonstrates. He did not so much preach to his audience as wind himself through unexpected ways into the hearts of the audience; and they who heard suddenly found their hearts preaching to themselves. He took for his text, "Cast down, but not destroyed." And out of this text he framed a discourse full of true Gospel tenderness, which seemed to raise up comfort as the saving, against despair as the evil, principle of mortal life. The congregation was what is called "brilliant" — statesmen, and peers, and great authors, and fine ladies—people whom the inconsiderate believe to stand little in need of comfort, and never to be subjected to despair. In many an intent or drooping face in that brilliant congregation might be read a very different tale. But of all present there was no one whom the discourse so moved as a woman, who, chancing to pass that way, had followed the throng into the Chapel, and with difficulty obtained a seat at the far end; a woman who had not been within the walls of chapel or church for long years — a grim woman, in iron gray. There she sate, unnoticed, in her remote corner; and before the preacher had done, her face was hidden behind her clasped hands, and she

was weeping such tears as she had not wept since childhood.

On leaving church Darrell said little more to the Colonel than this: "Your nephew takes me by surprise. The Church wants such men. He will have a grand career, if life be spared to him." Then he sank into a reverie, from which he broke abruptly—"Your nephew was at school with my boy. Had my son lived, what had been *his* career?"

The Colonel, never encouraging painful subjects, made no rejoinder.

"Bring George to see me to-morrow. I shrunk from asking it before: I thought the sight of him would too much revive old sorrows, but I feel I should accustom myself to face every memory. Bring him."

The next day the Colonel took George to Darrell's; but George had been pre-engaged till late at noon, and Darrell was just leaving home, and at his street-door, when the uncle and nephew came. They respected his time too much to accept his offer to come in, but walked beside him for a few minutes, as he bestowed upon George those compliments which are sweet to the ear of rising men from the lips of those who have risen.

"I remember you, George, as a boy," said Darrell, "and thanked you then for good advice to a school-fellow, who is lost to your counsels now." He faltered an instant, but went on firmly: "You had then a slight defect in utterance, which, I understand from your uncle, increased as you grew older; so that I never anticipated for you the fame that you are achieving. *Orator fit*—you must have been admirably taught. In the management of your voice, in the excellence of your delivery, I see that you are one of the few who deem that the Divine Word should not be unworthily uttered. The debater on beer bills may be excused from studying the orator's effects; but all that enforce, dignify, adorn, make the becoming studies of him who strives by eloquence to people heaven; whose task it is to adjure the thoughtless, animate the languid, soften the callous, humble the proud, alarm the guilty, comfort the sorrowful, call back to the fold the lost. Is the culture to be slovenly where the glebe is so fertile? The only field left in modern times for the ancient orator's sublime conceptions, but laborious training, is the Preacher's. And I own, George, that I envy the masters who skilled to the Preacher's art an intellect like yours."

"Masters," said the Colonel, "I thought all those elocution masters failed with you, George. You cured and taught yourself. Did not you? No! Why, then, who was your teacher?"

George looked very much embarrassed, and, attempting to answer, began horribly to stutter.

Darrell, conceiving that a preacher whose fame was not yet confirmed, might reasonably dislike to confess those obligations to elaborate study, which, if known, might detract from his effect, or expose him to ridicule, hastened to change the subject. "You have been to the country, I hear, George; at your living, I suppose?"

"No. I have not been there very lately; traveling about."

"Have you seen Lady Montfort since your return?" asked the Colonel.

"I only returned on Saturday night. I go to Lady Montfort's, at Twickenham, this evening."

"She has a delightful retreat," said the Colonel. "But if she wish to avoid admiration, she should not make the banks of the river her favorite haunt. I know some romantic admirers who, when she reappears in the world, may be rival aspirants, and who have much taken to rowing since Lady Montfort has retired to Twickenham. They catch a glimpse of her, and return to boast of it. But they report that there is a young lady seen walking with her—an extremely pretty one—who is she? People ask *me*—as if I knew every thing."

"A companion, I suppose," said George, more and more confused. "But, pardon me, I must leave you now. Good-by, uncle. Good-day, Mr. Darrell."

Darrell did not seem to observe George take leave, but walked on, his hat over his brows, lost in one of his frequent fits of abstracted gloom.

"If my nephew were not married," said the Colonel, "I should regard his embarrassment with much suspicion—embarrassed at every point, from his travels about the country to the question of a young lady at Twickenham. I wonder who that young lady can be—not one of the Viponts, or I should have heard. Are there any young ladies on the Lyndsay side?—Eh, Darrell?"

"What do I care—your head runs on young ladies," answered Darrell, with peevish vivacity, as he stopped abruptly at Carr Vipont's door.

"And your feet do not seem to run from them," said the Colonel; and, with an ironical salute, walked away, while the expanding portals ingulfed his friend.

As he sauntered up St. James's Street, nodding toward the thronged windows of its various clubs, the Colonel suddenly encountered Lionel, and, taking the young gentleman's arm, said, "If you are not very much occupied, will you waste half an hour on me?—I am going homeward."

Lionel readily assented, and the Colonel continued: "Are you in want of your cabriolet to-day, or can you lend it to me? I have asked a Frenchman, who brings me a letter of introduction, to dine at the nearest *restaurant* to which one can ask a Frenchman. I need not say that is Greenwich; and if I took him in a cabriolet, he would not suspect that he was taken five miles out of town."

"Alas! my dear Colonel, I have just sold my cabriolet."

"What! old-fashioned already? True, it has been built three months. Perhaps the horse, too, has become an antique in some other collection—silent—um!—cabriolet and horse both sold?"

"Both," said Lionel, ruefully.

"Nothing surprises me that man can do," said the Colonel, "or I should be surprised. When, acting on Darrell's general instructions for your outfit, I bought that horse, I flattered myself that I had chosen well. But rare are good horses—rarer still a good judge of them; I suppose I was cheated, and the brute proved a screw."

"The finest cab-horse in London, my dear Colonel, and every one knows how proud I was of him. But I wanted money, and had nothing

else that would bring the sum I required. Oh, Colonel Morley, do hear me!"

"Certainly, I am not deaf, nor is St. James's Street. When a man says, 'I have parted with my horse because I wanted money,' I advise him to say it in a whisper."

"I have been imprudent, at least unlucky, and I must pay the penalty. A friend of mine—that is, not exactly a friend, but an acquaintance—whom I see every day—one of my own set—asked me to sign my name at Paris to a bill at three months' date, as his security. He gave me his honor that I should hear no more of it—he would be sure to take up the bill when due—a man whom I supposed to be as well off as myself! You will allow that I could scarcely refuse—at all events, I did not. The bill became due two days ago; my friend does not pay it, and indeed says he can not, and the holder of the bill calls on me. He was very civil—offered to renew it—pressed me to take my time, etc.; but I did not like his manner, and as to my friend, I find that, instead of being well off, as I supposed, he is hard up, and that I am not the first he has got into the same scrape—not intending it, I am sure. He's really a very good fellow, and, if I wanted security, would be it tomorrow, to any amount."

"I've no doubt of it—to any amount!" said the Colonel.

"So I thought it best to conclude the matter at once. I had saved nothing from my allowance, munificent as it is. I could not have the face to ask Mr. Darrell to remunerate me for my own imprudence. I should not like to borrow from my mother—I know it would be inconvenient to her. I sold both horse and cabriolet this morning. I had just been getting the check cashed when I met you. I intend to take the money myself to the bill-holder. I have just the sum—£200."

"The horse alone was worth that," said the Colonel, with a faint sigh—"not to be replaced. France and Russia have the pick of our stables. However, if it is sold, it is sold—talk no more of it. I hate painful subjects. You did right not to renew the bill—it is opening an account with Ruin; and though I avoid preaching on money-makers, or, indeed, any other (preaching is my nephew's vocation, not mine), yet allow me to extract from you a solemn promise never again to sign bills, nor to draw them. Be to your friend what you please except security for him. Orestes never asked Pylades to help him to borrow at fifty per cent. Promise me—your word of honor as a gentleman! Do you hesitate?"

"My dear Colonel," said Lionel, frankly, "I do hesitate. I might promise not to sign a money-lender's bill on my own account, though really I think you take rather an exaggerated view of what is, after all, a common occurrence—"

"Do I?" said the Colonel, meekly. "I'm sorry to hear it. I detest exaggeration. Go on. You might promise not to ruin yourself—but you object to promise not to help in the ruin of your friend."

"That is exquisite irony, Colonel," said Lionel, piqued; "but it does not deal with the difficulty, which is simply this: When a man whom you call friend—whom you walk with, ride with, dine with almost every day, says to you, 'I am in immediate want of a few hundreds—I don't ask you to lend them to me, perhaps you can't—but assist me to borrow—trust to my honor that the debt shall not fall on you,' why, then, it seems as if to refuse the favor was to tell the man you call friend that you doubt his honor; and though I have been caught once in that way, I feel that I must be caught very often before I should have the moral courage to say 'No!' Don't ask me, then, to promise—be satisfied with my assurance that in future, at least, I will be more cautious, and if the loss fall on me, why, the worst that can happen is to do again what I do now."

"Nay, you would not perhaps have another horse and cab to sell. In that case, you would do the reverse of what you do now—you would renew the bill—the debt would run on like a snow-ball—in a year or two you would owe, not hundreds, but thousands. But come in—here we are at my door."

The Colonel entered his drawing-room. A miracle of exquisite neatness the room was—rather effeminate, perhaps, in its attributes; but that was no sign of the Colonel's tastes, but of his popularity with the ladies. All those pretty things were their gifts. The tapestry on the chairs their work—the *sèvre* on the consoles—the clock on the mantle-shelf—the inkstand, paper-cutter, taper-stand on the writing-table—their birthday presents. Even the white woolly Maltese dog that sprang from the rug to welcome him—even the flowers in the *jardinier*—even the tasteful cottage-piano, and the very music-stand beside it—and the card-trays, piled high with invitations—were contributions from the forgiving sex to the unrequiting bachelor.

Surveying his apartment with a complacent air, the Colonel sank into his easy *fauteuil*, and drawing off his gloves leisurely, said—

"No man has more friends than I have—never did I lose one—never did I sign a bill. Your father pursued a different policy—he signed many bills—and lost many friends."

Lionel, much distressed, looked down, and evidently desired to have done with the subject. Not so the Colonel. That shrewd man, though he did not preach, had a way all his own, which was perhaps quite as effective as any sermon by a fashionable layman can be to an impatient youth.

"Yes," resumed the Colonel, "it is the old story. One always begins by being security to a friend. The discredit of the thing is familiarized to one's mind by the false show of generous confidence in another. Then what you have done for a friend, a friend should do for you—a hundred or two would be useful now—you are sure to repay it in three months. To Youth the Future seems safe as the Bank of England, and distant as the Peaks of Himalaya. You pledge your honor that in three months you will release your friend. The three months expire. To release the one friend, you catch hold of another—the bill is renewed, premium and interest thrown into the next pay-day—soon the account multiplies, and with it the honor dwindles—your NAME circulates from hand to hand on the back of doubtful paper—your name, which, in all money transactions, should grow higher and higher each year you live, falling down every month like the shares in a swindling speculation. You begin by what you call trusting a

friend, that is, aiding him to self-destruction—buying him arsenic to clear his complexion; you end by dragging all near you into your own abyss, as a drowning man would clutch at his own brother. Lionel Haughton, the saddest expression I ever saw in your father's face was when—when—but you shall hear the story."

"No, Sir; spare me. Since you so insist on it, I will give the promise—it is enough; and my father—"

"Was as honorable as you when he first signed his name to a friend's bill; and perhaps promised to do so no more as reluctantly as you do. You had better let me say on; if I stop now, you will forget all about it by this day twelvemonth; if I go on, you will never forget. There are other examples besides your father. I am about to name one."

Lionel resigned himself to the operation, throwing his handkerchief over his face as if he had taken chloroform.

"When I was young," resumed the Colonel, "I chanced to make acquaintance with a man of infinite whim and humor; fascinating as Darrell himself, though in a very different way. We called him Willy—you know the kind of man one calls by his Christian name, cordially abbreviated—that kind of man seems never to be quite grown up; and therefore never rises in life. I never knew a man called Willy after the age of thirty, who did not come to a melancholy end! Willy was the natural son of a rich, helter-skelter, cleverish, maddish, stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet, by a celebrated French actress. The title is extinct now; and so, I believe, is that genus of stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet. Sir Julian Losely—"

"Losely!" echoed Lionel.

"Yes; do you know the name?"

"I never heard it till yesterday. I want to tell you what I did hear then—but after your story—go on."

"Sir Julian Losely (Willy's father) lived with the French lady as his wife, and reared Willy in his house, with as much pride and fondness as if he intended him for his heir. The poor boy, I suspect, got but little regular education; though, of course, he spoke his French mother's tongue like a native; and, thanks also perhaps to his mother, he had an extraordinary talent for mimicry and acting. His father was passionately fond of private theatricals, and Willy had early practice in that line. I once saw him act Falstaff in a country-house, and I doubt if Quin could have acted it better. Well, when Willy was still a mere boy, he lost his mother, the actress. Sir Julian married—had a legitimate daughter—died intestate—and the daughter, of course, had the personal property, which was not much; the heir-at-law got the land, and poor Willy nothing. But Willy was a universal favorite with his father's old friends—wild fellows like Sir Julian himself: among them there were two cousins, with large country-houses, sporting men, and bachelors. They shared Willy between them, and quarreled which should have the most of him. So he grew up to be man, with no settled provision, but always welcome, not only to the two cousins, but at every house in which, like Milton's lark, 'he came to startle the dull night'—the most amusing companion!—a famous shot—a capital horseman—knew the ways of all animals, fishes, and birds; I verily believe he could have coaxed a pug-dog to point, and an owl to sing. Void of all malice, up to all fun. Imagine how much people would court, and how little they would do for, a Willy of that sort. Do I bore you?"

"On the contrary, I am greatly interested."

"One thing a Willy, if a Willy could be wise, ought to do for himself—keep single. A wedded Willy is in a false position. My Willy wedded—for love, too—an amiable girl, I believe—(I never saw her; it was long afterward that I knew Willy)—but as poor as himself. The friends and relatives then said—'This is serious; something *must* be done for Willy.' It was easy to say, 'something must be done,' and monstrous difficult to do it. While the relations were consulting, his half-sister, the Baronet's lawful daughter, died, unmarried; and, though she had ignored him in life, left him £2000. 'I have hit it now,' cried one of the cousins. 'Willy is fond of a country life. I will let him have a farm on a nominal rent, his £2000 will stock it; and his farm, which is surrounded by woods, will be a capital hunting meet. As long as I live Willy shall be mounted.'

"Willy took the farm, and astonished his friends by attending to it. It was just beginning to answer when his wife died, leaving him only one child—a boy; and her death made him so melancholy that he could no longer attend to his farm. He threw it up; invented the proceeds as a capital, and lived on the interest as a gentleman at large. He traveled over Europe for some time—chiefly on foot—came back, having recovered his spirits—resumed his old, desultory, purposeless life at different country-houses; and at one of those houses I and Charles Haughton met him. Here I pause, to state that Will Losely at that time impressed me with the idea that he was a thoroughly honest man. Though he was certainly no formalist—though he had lived with wild sets of convivial scapegraces—though, out of sheer high spirits, he would now and then make conventional Proprieties laugh at their own long faces; yet, I should have said, that Bayard himself—and Bayard was no saint—could not have been more incapable of a disloyal, rascally, shabby action. Nay, in the plain matter of integrity, his ideas might be called refined, almost Quixotic. If asked to give or to lend, Willy's hand was in his pocket in an instant; but though thrown among rich men—careless as himself—Willy never put his hand into their pockets, never borrowed, never owed. He would accept hospitality—make frank use of your table, your horses, your dogs—but your money, no! He repaid all he took from a host by rendering himself the pleasantest guest that host ever entertained. Poor Willy! I think I see his quaint smile brimming over with sly sport! The sound of his voice was like a cry of 'half holiday' in a school-room. He dishonest! I should as soon have suspected the noonday sun of being a dark lantern! I remember, when he and I were walking home from wild-duck shooting in advance of our companions, a short conversation between us that touched me greatly, for it showed that, under all his levity, there were sound sense and right feeling. I asked him about his son, then a boy

at school. 'Why, as it was the Christmas vacation, he had refused our host's suggestion to let the lad come down there?' 'Ah,' said he, 'don't fancy that I will lead my son to grow up a scatter-brained good-for-naught like his father. His society is the joy of my life; whenever I have enough in my pockets to afford myself that joy, I go and hire a quiet lodging close by his school, to have him with me from Saturday till Monday all to myself—where he never hears wild fellows call me "Willy," and ask me to mimic. I had hoped to have spent this vacation with him in that way, but his school-bill was higher than usual, and after paying it I had not a guinea to spare—obliged to come here where they lodge and feed me for nothing; the boy's uncle on the mother's side—a respectable man in business—kindly takes him home for the holidays; but did not ask me, because his wife—and I don't blame her—thinks I'm too wild for a city clerk's sober household.'

"I asked Will Losely what he meant to do with his son, and hinted that I might get the boy a commission in the army without purchase.

"'No,' said Willy, 'I know what it is to set up for a gentleman on the capital of a beggar. It is to be a shuttlecock between discontent and temptation. I would not have my lost wife's son waste his life as I have done. He would be more spoiled, too, than I have been. The handsomest boy you ever saw—and bold as a lion. Once in that set'—(pointing over his shoulders toward some of our sporting comrades, whose loud laughter every now and then reached our ears)—'once in that set he would never be out of it — fit for nothing. I swore to his mother, on her death-bed, that I would bring him up to avoid my errors — that he should be no hanger-on and led-Captain! Swore to her that he should be reared according to his real station—the station of his mother's kin (*I* have no station)—and if I can but see him an honest British trader — respectable, upright, equal to the highest—because no rich man's dependent, and no poor man's jest — my ambition will be satisfied. And now you understand, Sir, why my boy is not here.' You would say a father who spoke thus had a man's honest stuff in him. Eh, Lionel?"

"Yes, and a true gentleman's heart, too!"

"So I thought; yet I fancied I knew the world! After that conversation I quitted our host's roof, and only once or twice afterward, at country houses, met William Losely again. To say truth, his chief patrons and friends were not exactly in my set. But your father continued to see Willy pretty often. They took a great fancy to each other. Charlie, you know, was jovial — fond of private theatricals, too; in short, they became great allies. Some years after, as ill luck would have it, Charles Haughton, while selling off his Middlesex property, was in immediate want of £1200. He could get it on a bill, but not without security. His bills were already rather down in the market, and he had already exhausted most of the friends whose security was esteemed by accommodators any better than his own. In an evil hour he had learned that poor Willy had just £1500 out upon mortgage; and the money-lender, who was lawyer for the property on which the mortgage was, knew it too. It was on the interest of this £1500 that Willy lived, having spent the rest of his little capital in settling his son as a clerk in a first-rate commercial house. Charles Haughton went down to shoot at the house where Willy was a guest—shot with him—drank with him—talked with him—proved to him, no doubt, that long before the three months were over the Middlesex property would be sold; the bill taken up, Willy might trust to his honor. Willy did trust. Like you, my dear Lionel, he had not the moral courage to say 'No.' Your father, I am certain, meant to repay him; your father never in cold blood meant to defraud any human being; but —your father gambled! A debt of honor at *piquet* preceded the claim of a bill-discounter. The £1200 were forestalled—your father was penniless. The money-lender came upon Willy. Sure that Charles Haughton would yet redeem his promise, Willy renewed the bill another three months on usurious terms; those months over, he came to town to find your father hiding between four walls, unable to stir out for fear of arrest. Willy had no option but to pay the money; and when your father knew that it was so paid, and that the usury had swallowed up the whole of Willy's little capital, then, I say, I saw upon Charles Haughton's once radiant face the saddest expression I ever saw on mortal man's. And sure I am that all the joys your father ever knew as a man of pleasure were not worth the agony and remorse of that moment. I respect your emotion, Lionel, but you begin as your father began; and if I had not told you this story you might have ended as your father ended."

Lionel's face remained covered, and it was only by choking gasps that he interrupted the Colonel's narrative. "Certainly," resumed Alban Morley, in a reflective tone, "Certainly that villain—I mean William Losely, for villain he afterward proved to be—had the sweetest, most forgiving temper! He might have gone about to his kinsmen and friends denouncing Charles Haughton, and saying by what solemn promises he had been undone. But no! such a story, just at that moment, would have crushed Charles Haughton's last chance of ever holding up his head again; and Charles told me (for it was through Charles that I knew the tale) that Willy's parting words to him were, 'Do not fret, Charlie. After all, my boy is now settled in life, and I am a cat with nine lives, and should fall on my legs if thrown out of a garret window. Don't fret.' So he kept the secret, and told the money-lender to hold his tongue. Poor Willy! I never asked a rich friend to lend me money but once in my life. It was then. I went to Guy Darrell, who was in full practice, and said to him, 'Lend me one thousand pounds. I may never repay you.' 'Five thousand pounds, if you like it,' said he. 'One will do.' I took the money, and sent it to Willy. Alas! he returned it, writing word that 'Providence had been very kind to him; he had just been appointed to a capital place, with a magnificent salary. The cat had fallen on its legs.' He bade me comfort Haughton with that news. The money went back into Darrell's pocket, and perhaps wandered thence to Charles Haughton's creditors. Now for the appointment. At the country house, to which Willy

had returned destitute, he had met a stranger (no relation), who said to him, 'You live with these people—shoot their game—break in their horses—see to their farms—and they give you nothing! You are no longer very young—you should lay by your little income, and add to it. Live with me, and I will give you £300 a year. I am parting with my steward—take his place, but be my friend.' William Losely, of course, closed with the proposition. This gentleman, whose name was Gunston, I had known slightly in former times (people say I know every body)—a soured, bilious, melancholy, indolent, misanthropical old bachelor. With a magnificent place universally admired, and a large estate universally envied, he lived much alone, ruminating on the bitterness of life and the nothingness of worldly blessings. Meeting Willy at the country house to which, by some predestined relaxation of misanthropy, he had been decoyed, for the first time for years Mr. Gunston was heard to laugh. He said to himself, 'Here is a man who actually amuses me.' William Losely contrived to give the misanthrope a new zest of existence; and when he found that business could be made pleasant, the rich man conceived an interest in his own house, gardens, property. For the sake of William's merry companionship he would even ride over his farms, and actually carried a gun. Meanwhile the property, I am told, was really well managed. Ah! that fellow Willy was a born genius, and could have managed every body's affairs except his own. I heard of all this with pleasure (people say I hear every thing)—when one day a sporting man seizes me by the button at Tattersall's—'Do you know the news? Will Losely is in prison on a charge of robbing his employer!'"

"Robbing! incredible!" exclaimed Lionel.

"My dear Lionel, it was after hearing that news that I established as invariable my grand maxim, *Nil admirari*—never to be astonished at any thing!"

"But of course he was innocent?"

"On the contrary, he confessed, was committed; pleaded guilty, and was transported! People who knew Willy said that Gunston ought to have declined to drag him before a magistrate, or, at the subsequent trial, have abstained from giving evidence against him; that Willy had been till then a faithful steward; the whole proceeds of the estate had passed through his hands; he might, in transactions for timber, have cheated, undetected, to twice the amount of the alleged robbery; it must have been a momentary aberration of reason; the rich man should have let him off. But I side with the rich man. His last belief in his species was annihilated. He must have been inexorable. He could never be amused, never be interested again. He *was* inexorable and—vindictive."

"But what were the facts?—what was the evidence?"

"Very little came out on the trial; because, in pleading guilty, the court had merely to consider the evidence which had sufficed to commit him. The trial was scarcely noticed in the London papers. William Losely was not like a man known about town. His fame was confined to those who resorted to old-fashioned country houses, chiefly single men, for the sake of sport. But stay. I felt such an interest in the case that I made an abstract or *precis*, not only of all that appeared, but all that I could learn of its leading circumstances. 'Tis a habit of mine, whenever any of my acquaintances embroil themselves with the Crown—" The Colonel rose, unlocked a small glazed book-case, selected from the contents a MS. volume, reseated himself, turned the pages, found the place sought, and, reading from it, resumed his narrative. "'One evening Mr. Gunston came to William Losely's private apartment. Losely had two or three rooms appropriated to himself in one side of the house, which was built in a quadrangle round a court-yard. When Losely opened his door to Mr. Gunston's knock, it struck Mr. Gunston that his manner seemed confused. After some talk on general subjects, Losely said that he had occasion to go to London next morning for a few days on private business of his own. This annoyed Mr. Gunston. He observed that Losely's absence just then would be inconvenient. He reminded him that a tradesman, who lived at a distance, was coming over the next day to be paid for a vinery he had lately erected, and on the charge for which there was a dispute. Could not Losely at least stay to settle it? Losely replied, "that he had already, by correspondence, adjusted the dispute, having suggested deductions which the tradesman had agreed to, and that Mr. Gunston would only have to give a check for the balance—viz., £270." Thereon Mr. Gunston remarked, "If you were not in the habit of paying my bills for me out of what you receive, you would know that I seldom give checks. I certainly shall not give one now, for I have the money in the house." Losely observed, "that is a bad habit of yours keeping large sums in your own house. You may be robbed." Gunston answered, "Safer than lodging large sums in a country bank. Country banks break. My grandfather lost £1000 by the failure of a country bank; and my father, therefore, always took his payments in cash, remitting them to London from time to time as he went thither himself. I do the same, and I have never been robbed of a farthing that I know of. Who would rob a great house like this, full of men-servants?" "That's true," said Losely; "so if you are sure you have as much by you, you will pay the bill, and have done with it. I shall be back before Sparks the builder comes to be paid for the new barns to the home farm—that will be £600; but I shall be taking money for timber next week. He can be paid out of that." GUNSTON. "No, I will pay Sparks, too, out of what I have in my bureau; and the timber-merchant can pay his debt into my London banker's." LOSELY. "Do you mean that you have enough for both these bills actually in the house?" GUNSTON. "Certainly, in the bureau in my study. I don't know how much I've got. It may be £1500—it may be £1700. I have not counted; I am such a bad man of business; but I am sure it is more than £1400." Losely made some jocular observation to the effect that if Gunston never kept an account of what he had, he could never tell whether he was robbed, and, therefore, never would be robbed; since, according to Othello,

"He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robbed at all."

After that, Losely became absent in manner, and seemed impatient to get rid of Mr. Gunston, hinting that he had the labor-book to look over, and some orders to write out for the bailiff, and that he should start early the next morning.'"

Here the Colonel looked up from his MS., and said, episodically, "Perhaps you will fancy that these dialogues are invented by me after the fashion of the ancient historians? Not so. I give you the report of what passed, as Gunston repeated it *verbatim;* and I suspect that his memory was pretty accurate. Well" (here Alban returned to his MS.), "'Gunston left Willy, and went into his own study, where he took tea by himself. When his valet brought it in, he told the man that Mr. Losely was going to town early the next morning, and ordered the servant to see himself that coffee was served to Mr. Losely before he went. The servant observed "that Mr. Losely had seemed much out of sorts lately, and that it was perhaps some unpleasant affair connected with the gentleman who had come to see him two days before." Gunston had not heard of such a visit. Losely had not mentioned it. When the servant retired, Gunston, thinking over Losely's quotation respecting his money, resolved to ascertain what he had in his bureau. He opened it, examined the drawers, and found, stowed away in different places at different times, a larger sum than he had supposed—gold and notes to the amount of £1975, of which nearly £300 were in sovereigns. He smoothed the notes carefully; and, for want of other occupation, and with the view of showing Losely that he could profit by a hint, he entered the numbers of the notes in his pocket-book, placed them all together in one drawer with the gold, relocked his bureau, and went shortly afterward to bed. The next day (Losely having gone in the morning) the tradesman came to be paid for the vinery. Gunston went to his bureau, took out his notes, and found £250 were gone. He could hardly believe his senses. Had he made a mistake in counting? No. There was his pocket-book, the missing notes entered duly therein. Then he recounted the sovereigns, 142 were gone of them—nearly £400 in all thus abstracted. He refused at first to admit suspicion of Losely; but, on interrogating his servants, the valet deposed, that he was disturbed about two o'clock in the morning by the bark of the house-dog, which was let loose of a night within the front court-yard of the house. Not apprehending robbers, but fearing the dog might also disturb his master, he got out of his window (being on the ground-floor) to pacify the animal; that he then saw, in the opposite angle of the building, a light moving along the casement of the passage between Losely's rooms and Mr. Gunston's study. Surprised at this, at such an hour, he approached that part of the building, and saw the light very faintly through the chinks in the shutters of the study. The passage windows had no shutters, being old-fashioned stone mullions. He waited by the wall a few minutes, when the light again reappeared in the passage; and he saw a figure in a cloak, which, being in a peculiar color, he recognized at once as Losely's, pass rapidly along; but before the figure had got half through the passage, the light was extinguished, and the servant could see no more. But so positive was he, from his recognition of the cloak, that the man was Losely, that he ceased to feel alarm or surprise, thinking, on reflection, that Losely, sitting up later than usual to transact business before his departure, might have gone into his employer's study for any book or paper which he might have left there. The dog began barking again, and seemed anxious to get out of the court-yard to which he was confined; but the servant gradually appeased him—went to bed, and somewhat overslept himself. When he woke, he hastened to take the coffee into Losely's room, but Losely was gone. Here there was another suspicious circumstance. It had been a question how the bureau had been opened, the key being safe in Gunston's possession, and there being no sign of force. The lock was one of those rude, old-fashioned ones which are very easily picked, but to which a modern key does not readily fit. In the passage there was found a long nail crooked at the end; and that nail the superintendent of the police (who had been summoned) had the wit to apply to the lock of the bureau, and it unlocked and relocked it easily. It was clear that whoever had so shaped the nail could not have used such an instrument for the first time, and must be a practiced picklock. That, one would suppose at first, might exonerate Losely; but he was so clever a fellow at all mechanical contrivances, that, coupled with the place of finding, the nail made greatly against him; and still more so, when some nails precisely similar were found on the chimney-piece of an inner-room in his apartment, a room between that in which he had received Gunston and his bed-chamber, and used by him both as study and workshop, the nails, indeed, which were very long and narrow, with a Gothic ornamental head, were at once recognized by the carpenter on the estate as having been made according to Losely's directions, for a garden-bench to be placed in Gunston's favorite walk, Gunston having remarked, some days before, that he should like a seat there, and Losely having undertaken to make one from a design by Pugin. Still loth to believe in Losely's guilt, Gunston went to London with the police superintendent, the valet, and the neighboring attorney. They had no difficulty in finding Losely; he was at his son's lodgings in the City, near the commercial house in which the son was a clerk. On being told of the robbery, he seemed at first unaffectedly surprised, evincing no fear. He was asked whether he had gone into the study about two o'clock in the morning? He said, "No; why should I?" The valet exclaimed, "But I saw you—I knew you by that old gray cloak, with the red lining. Why, there it is now—on that chair yonder. I'll swear it is the same." Losely then began to tremble visibly, and grew extremely pale. A question was next put to him as to the nail, but he seemed quite stupefied, muttering, "Good Heavens! the cloak—you mean to say you saw that cloak?" They searched his person—found on him some sovereigns, silver, and one bank-note for five pounds. The number on that bank-note corresponded with a number in Gunston's pocket-book. He was asked to say where he got that five-pound note. He refused to answer. Gunston said, "It is one of the notes stolen from me!"

Losely cried, fiercely, "Take care what you say. How do you know?" Gunston replied, "I took an account of the numbers of my notes on leaving your room. Here is the memorandum in my pocket-book—see—" Losely looked, and fell back as if shot. Losely's brother-in-law was in the room at the time, and he exclaimed, "Oh, William! you can't be guilty. You are the honestest fellow in the world. There must be some mistake, gentlemen. Where did you get the note, William—say?" Losely made no answer, but seemed lost in thought or stupefaction. "I will go for your son, William—perhaps he may help to explain." Losely then seemed to wake up. "My son! what! would you expose me before my son? he's gone into the country, as you know. What has he to do with it? I took the notes—there—I have confessed. Have done with it," or words to that effect.'

"Nothing more of importance," said the Colonel, turning over the leaves of his MS., "except to account for the crime. And here we come back to the money-lender. You remember the valet said that a gentleman had called on Losely two days before the robbery. This proved to be the identical bill-discounter to whom Losely had paid away his fortune. This person deposed that Losely had written to him some days before, stating that he wanted to borrow two or three hundred pounds, which he could repay by installments out of his salary. What would be the terms? The money-lender having occasion to be in the neighborhood, called to discuss the matter in person, and to ask if Losely could not get some other person to join in security—suggesting his brother-in-law. Losely replied that it was a favor he would never ask any one; that his brother-in-law had no pecuniary means beyond his salary as a senior clerk; and, supposing that he (Losely) lost his place, which he might any day, if Gunston were displeased with him—how then could he be sure that his debt would not fall on the security? Upon which the money-lender remarked that the precarious nature of his income was the very reason why a security was wanted. And Losely answered, 'Ay; but you know that you incur that risk, and charge accordingly. Between you and me the debt and the hazard are mere matter of business, but between me and my security it would be a matter of honor.' Finally the money-lender agreed to find the sum required, though asking very high terms. Losely said he would consider, and let him know. There the conversation ended. But Gunston inquired 'if Losely had ever had dealings with the money-lender before, and for what purpose it was likely he would want the money now?' and the money-lender answered 'that probably Losely had some sporting or gaming speculations on the sly, for that it was to pay a gambling debt that he had joined Captain Haughton in a bill for £1200.' And Gunston afterward told a friend of mine that this it was that decided him to appear as a witness at the trial; and you will observe that if Gunston had kept away, there would have been no evidence sufficient to insure conviction. But Gunston considered that the man who could gamble away his whole fortune must be incorrigible, and that Losely, having concealed from him that he had become destitute by such transactions, must have been more than a mere security in a joint bill with Captain Haughton. Gunston could never have understood such an inconsistency in human nature, that the same man who broke open his bureau should have become responsible to the amount of his fortune for a debt of which he had not shared the discredit, and still less that such a man should, in case he had been so generously imprudent, have concealed his loss out of delicate tenderness for the character of the man to whom he owed his ruin. Therefore, in short, Gunston looked on his dishonest steward, not as a man tempted by a sudden impulse in some moment of distress, at which a previous life was belied, but as a confirmed, dissimulating sharper, to whom public justice allowed no mercy. And thus, Lionel, William Losely was prosecuted, tried, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. By pleading guilty, the term was probably made shorter than it otherwise would have been."

Lionel continued too agitated for words. The Colonel, not seeming to heed his emotions, again ran his eye over the MS.

"I observe here that there are some queries entered as to the evidence against Losely. The solicitor whom, when I heard of his arrest, I engaged and sent down to the place on his behalf—"

"You did! Heaven reward you!" sobbed out Lionel. "But my father?—where was he?"

"Then?—in his grave."

Lionel breathed a deep sigh, as of thankfulness.

"The lawyer, I say—a sharp fellow—was of opinion that if Losely had refused to plead guilty, he could have got him off in spite of his first confession—turned the suspicion against some one else. In the passage where the nail was picked up, there was a door into the park. That door was found unbolted in the inside the next morning; a thief might therefore have thus entered, and passed at once into the study. The nail was discovered close by that door; the thief might have dropped it on putting out his light, which, by the valet's account, he must have done, when he was near the door in question, and required the light no more. Another circumstance in Losely's favor. Just outside the door, near a laurel-bush, was found the fag-end of one of those small rose-colored wax-lights which are often placed in lucifer match-boxes. If this had been used by the thief, it would seem as if, extinguishing the light before he stepped into the air, he very naturally jerked away the morsel of taper left, when, in the next moment, he was out of the house. But Losely would not have gone out of the house; nor was he, nor any one about the premises, ever known to make use of that kind of taper, which would rather appertain to the fashionable fopperies of a London dandy. You will have observed, too, the valet had not seen the thief's face. His testimony rested solely on the colors of a cloak, which, on cross-examination, might have gone for nothing. The dog had barked before the light was seen. It was not the light that made him bark. He wished to get out of the court-yard; that looked as if there were some stranger in the grounds beyond. Following up this clew, the lawyer ascertained that a strange man had been seen in the park toward the gray of the evening, walking up in the direction of the

house. And here comes the strong point. At the railway station, about five miles from Mr. Gunston's, a strange man had arrived just in time to take his place in the night train from the north toward London, stopping there at four o'clock in the morning. The station-master remembered the stranger buying the ticket, but did not remark his appearance. The porter did, however, so far notice him, as he hurried into a first-class carriage, that he said afterward to the station-master, 'Why, that gentleman has a gray cloak just like Mr. Losely's. If he had not been thinner and taller, I should have thought it was Mr. Losely.' Well, Losely went to the same station the next morning, taking an early train, going thither on foot, with his carpet-bag in his hand; and both the porter and station-master declared that he had no cloak on him at the time; and as he got into a second-class carriage, the porter even said to him, ''Tis a sharp morning, Sir; I'm afraid you'll be cold.' Furthermore, as to the purpose for which Losely had wished to borrow of the money-lender, his brother-in-law stated that Losely's son had been extravagant, had contracted debts, and was even hiding from his creditors in a country town, at which William Losely had stopped for a few hours on his way to London. He knew the young man's employer had written kindly to Losely several days before, lamenting the son's extravagance; intimating that unless his debts were discharged, he must lose the situation in which otherwise he might soon rise to competence, for that he was quick and sharp; and that it was impossible not to feel indulgent toward him, he was so lively and so good-looking. The trader added that he would forbear to dismiss the young man as long as he could. It was on the receipt of that letter that Losely had entered into communication with the money-lender, whom he had come to town to seek, and to whose house he was actually going at the very hour of Gunston's arrival. But why borrow of the money-lender, if he had just stolen more money than he had any need to borrow?

"The most damning fact against Losely, by the discovery in his possession of the £5 note, of which Mr. Gunston deposed to have taken the number, was certainly hard to get over; still an ingenious lawyer might have thrown doubt on Gunston's testimony—a man confessedly so careless might have mistaken the number, etc. The lawyer went, with these hints for defense, to see Losely himself in prison; but Losely declined his help—became very angry—said that he would rather suffer death itself than have suspicion transferred to some innocent man; and that, as to the cloak, it had been inside his carpet bag. So you see, bad as he was, there was something inconsistently honorable left in him still. Poor Willy! he would not even subpœna any of his old friends as to his general character. But even if he had, what could the Court do since he pleaded guilty? And now dismiss that subject, it begins to pain me extremely. You were to speak to me about some one of the same name when my story was concluded. What is it?"

"I am so confused," faltered Lionel, still quivering with emotion, "that I can scarcely answer you—scarcely recollect myself. But—but—while you were describing this poor William Losely, his talent for mimicry and acting, I could not help thinking that I had seen him." Lionel proceeded to speak of Gentleman Waife, "Can that be the man?"

Alban shook his head incredulously. He thought it so like a romantic youth to detect imaginary resemblances.

"No," said he, "my dear boy. My William Losely could never become a strolling player in a village fair. Besides, I have good reason to believe that Willy is well off; probably made money in the colony by some lucky hit: for when do you say you saw your stroller? Five years ago? Well, not very long before that date—perhaps a year or two—less than two years I am sure—this eccentric rascal sent Mr. Gunston, the man who had transported him, £100! Gunston, you must know, feeling more than ever bored and hipped when he lost Willy, tried to divert himself by becoming director in some railway company. The company proved a bubble; all turned their indignation on the one rich man who could pay where others cheated. Gunston was ruined—purse and character—fled to Calais; and there, less than seven years ago, when in great distress, he received from poor Willy a kind, affectionate, forgiving, letter, and £100. I have this from Gunston's nearest relation, to whom he told it, crying like a child. Willy gave no address; but it is clear that at the time he must have been too well off to turn mountebank at your miserable exhibition. Poor, dear, rascally, infamous, big-hearted Willy," burst out the Colonel. "I wish to Heaven he had only robbed me!"

"Sir," said Lionel, "rely upon it, that man you describe never robbed any one—'tis impossible."

"No—very possible!—human nature," said Alban Morley. "And, after all, he really owed Gunston that £100. For out of the sum stolen, Gunston received anonymously, even before the trial, all the missing notes, minus about that £100; and Willy therefore owed Gunston the money, but not, perhaps, that kind, forgiving letter. Pass on—quick—the subject is worse than the gout. You have heard before the name of Losely—possibly. There are many members of the old Baronet's family; but when or where did you hear it?"

"I will tell you; the man who holds the bill (ah, the word sickens me!) reminded me when he called that I had seen him at my mother's house—a chance acquaintance of hers—professed great regard for me—great admiration for Mr. Darrell—and then surprised me by asking if I had never heard Mr. Darrell speak of Mr. Jasper Losely."

"Jasper!" said the Colonel; "Jasper!—well, go on."

"When I answered 'No,' Mr. Poole (that is his name) shook his head, and muttered—'A sad affair—very bad business—I could do Mr. Darrell a great service if he would let me;' and then went on talking what seemed to me impertinent gibberish about 'family exposures' and 'poverty making men desperate,' and 'better compromise matters;' and finally wound up by begging me, 'if I loved Mr. Darrell, and wished to guard him from very great annoyance and suffering, to persuade him to give Mr. Poole an interview.' Then he talked about his own char-

acter in the City, and so forth, and entreating me 'not to think of paying him till quite convenient; that he would keep the bill in his desk; nobody should know of it; too happy to do me a favor'—laid his card on the table, and went away. Tell me, should I say any thing to Mr. Darrell about this or not?"

"Certainly not, till I have seen Mr. Poole myself. You have the money to pay him about you? Give it to me with Mr. Poole's address; I will call and settle the matter. Just ring the bell." (To the servant, entering) "Order my horse round." Then, when they were again alone, turning to Lionel abruptly, laying one hand on his shoulder, with the other grasping his hand warmly, cordially, "Young man," said Alban Morley, "I love you—I am interested in you—who would not be? I have gone through this story; put myself positively to pain—which I hate—solely for your good. You see what usury and money-lenders bring men to. Look me in the face! Do you feel now that you would have the 'moral courage' you before doubted of? Have you done with such things forever?"

"Forever, so help me Heaven! The lesson has been cruel, but I do thank and bless you for it."

"I knew you would. Mark this! never treat money affairs with levity—MONEY IS CHARACTER! Stop. I have bared a father's fault to a son. It was necessary—or even in his grave those faults might have revived in you. Now, I add this, if Charles Haughton—like you, handsome, high-spirited, favored by men, spoiled by women—if Charles Haughton, on entering life, could have seen, in the mirror I have held up to you, the consequences of pledging the morrow to pay for to-day, Charles Haughton would have been shocked as you are, cured as you will be. Humbled by your own first error, be lenient to all his. Take up his life where I first knew it; when his heart was loyal, his lips truthful. Raze out the interval; imagine that he gave birth to you in order to replace the leaves of existence we thus blot out and tear away. In every error avoided say, 'Thus the father warns the son;' in every honorable action or hard self-sacrifice, say, 'Thus the son pays a father's debt.'"

Lionel, clasping his hands together, raised his eyes streaming with tears, as if uttering inly a vow to Heaven. The Colonel bowed his soldier-crest with religious reverence, and glided from the room noiselessly.

CHAPTER VIII.

Being but one of the considerate pauses in a long journey—charitably afforded to the Reader.

COLONEL MORLEY found Mr. Poole at home, just returned from his office; he staid with that gentleman nearly an hour, and then went straight to Darrell. As the time appointed to meet the French acquaintance, who depended on his hospitalities for a dinner, was now nearly arrived, Alban's conference with his English friend was necessarily brief and hurried, though long enough to confirm one fact in Mr. Poole's statement, which had been unknown to the Colonel before that day, and the admission of which was to Guy Darrell a pang as sharp as ever wrenched confession from the lips of a prisoner in the cells of the Inquisition. On returning from Greenwich, and depositing his Frenchman in some melancholy theatre, time enough for that resentful foreigner to witness theft and murder committed upon an injured countryman's vaudeville, Alban hastened again to Carlton Gardens. He found Darrell alone, pacing his floor to and fro, in the habit he had acquired in earlier life, perhaps when meditating some complicated law-case, or wrestling with himself against some secret sorrow. There are men of quick nerves who require a certain action of the body for the better composure of the mind; Darrell was one of them.

During these restless movements, alternated by abrupt pauses, equally inharmonious to the supreme quiet which characterized his listener's tastes and habits, the haughty gentleman disburdened himself of at least one of the secrets which he had hitherto guarded from his early friend. But as that secret connects itself with the history of a Person about whom it is well that the reader should now learn more than was known to Darrell himself, we will assume our privilege to be ourselves the narrator, and at the cost of such dramatic vivacity as may belong to dialogue, but with the gain to the reader of clearer insight into those portions of the past which the occasion permits us to reveal—we will weave into something like method the more imperfect and desultory communications by which Guy Darrell added to Alban Morley's distasteful catalogue of painful subjects. The reader will allow, perhaps, that we thus evince a desire to gratify his curiosity, when we state, that of Arabella Crane, Darrell spoke but in one brief and angry sentence, and that not by the name in which the reader as yet alone knows her; and it is with the antecedents of Arabella Crane that our explanation will tranquilly commence.

CHAPTER IX.

Grim Arabella Crane.

ONCE on a time there lived a merchant named Fossett, a widower with three children, of whom a daughter, Arabella, was by some years the eldest. He was much respected, deemed a warm man, and a safe—attended diligently to his business—suffered no partner, no foreman, to dictate or intermeddle — liked his comforts, but made no pretense to fashion. His villa was at Clapham, not a showy but a solid edifice, with lodge, lawn, and gardens, chiefly notable for what is technically called *glass*—viz., a range of glass-houses on the most improved principles; the heaviest pines, the earliest strawberries. "I'm no judge of flowers," quoth Mr. Fossett, meekly. "Give me a plain lawn, provided it be close shaven. But I say to my gardener, 'Forcing is my hobby—a cucumber with my fish all the year round!'" Yet do not suppose Mr. Fossett ostentatious — quite the reverse. He would no more ruin himself for the sake of dazzling others than he would for the sake of serving them. He liked a warm house, spacious rooms, good living, old wine, for their inherent

merits. He cared not to parade them to public envy. When he dined alone, or with a single favored guest, the best Lafitte, the oldest sherry!—when extending the rites of miscellaneous hospitality to neighbors, relations, or other slight acquaintances—for Lafitte, Julien; and for sherry, Cape!—Thus not provoking vanity, nor courting notice, Mr. Fossett was without an enemy, and seemed without a care. Formal were his manners, formal his household, formal even the stout cob that bore him from Cheapside to Clapham, from Clapham to Cheapside. That cob could not even prick up its ears if it wished to shy—its ears were cropped, so were its mane and its tail.

Arabella early gave promise of beauty, and more than ordinary power of intellect and character. Her father bestowed on her every advantage of education. She was sent to a select boarding-school of the highest reputation; the strictest discipline, the best masters, the longest bills. At the age of seventeen she had become the show pupil of the seminary. Friends wondered somewhat why the prim merchant took such pains to lavish on his daughter the worldly accomplishments which seemed to give him no pleasure, and of which he never spoke with pride. But certainly, if she was so clever—first-rate musician, exquisite artist, accomplished linguist, "it was very nice in old Fossett to bear it so meekly, never crying her up, nor showing her off to less fortunate parents—very nice in him—good sense—greatness of mind."

"Arabella," said the worthy man, one day, a little time after she had left school for good; "Arabella," said he, "Mrs. ——," naming the head teacher in that famous school, "pays you a very high compliment in a letter I received from her this morning. She says it is a pity you are not a poor man's daughter—that you are so steady and so clever that you could make a fortune for yourself as a teacher."

Arabella at that age could smile gayly, and gayly she smiled at the notion conveyed in the compliment.

"No one can guess," resumed the father, twirling his thumbs and speaking rather through his nose, "the ups and downs in this mortal sphere of trial, 'specially in the mercantile community. If ever, when I'm dead and gone, adversity should come upon you, you will gratefully remember that I have given you the best of education, and take care of your little brother and sister, who are both—stupid!"

These doleful words did not make much impression on Arabella, uttered as they were in a handsome drawing-room, opening on the neat-shaven lawn it took three gardeners to shave, with a glittering side-view of those galleries of glass in which strawberries were ripe at Christmas, and cucumbers never failed to fish. Time went on. Arabella was now twenty-three—a very fine girl, with a decided manner—much occupied by her music, her drawing, her books, and her fancies. Fancies—for, like most girls with very active heads and idle hearts, she had a vague yearning for some excitement beyond the monotonous routine of a young lady's life; and the latent force of her nature inclined her to admire whatever was out of the beaten track—whatever was wild and daring. She had received two or three offers from young gentlemen in the same mercantile community as that which surrounded her father in this sphere of trial. But they did not please her; and she believed her father when he said that they only courted her under the idea that he would come down with something handsome; "whereas," said the merchant, "I hope you will marry an honest man, who will like you for yourself, and wait for your fortune till my will is read. As King William says to his son, in the *History of England*, 'I don't mean to strip till I go to bed.'"

One night, at a ball in Clapham, Arabella saw the man who was destined to exercise so baleful an influence over her existence. Jasper Losely had been brought to this ball by a young fellow-clerk in the same commercial house as himself; and then in all the bloom of that conspicuous beauty, to which the miniature Arabella had placed before his eyes so many years afterward did but feeble justice, it may well be conceived that he concentred on himself the admiring gaze of the assembly. Jasper was younger than Arabella; but, what with the height of his stature and the self-confidence of his air, he looked four or five and twenty. Certainly, in so far as the distance from childhood may be estimated by the loss of innocence, Jasper might have been any age! He was told that old Fossett's daughter would have a very fine fortune; that she was a strong-minded young lady, who governed her father, and would choose for herself; and accordingly he devoted himself to Arabella the whole of the evening. The effect produced on the mind of this ill-fated woman by her dazzling admirer was as sudden as it proved to be lasting. There was a strange charm in the very contrast between his rattling audacity and the bashful formalities of the swains who had hitherto wooed her, as if she frightened them. Even his good looks fascinated her less than that vital energy and power about the lawless brute, which to her seemed the elements of heroic character, though but the attributes of riotous spirits, magnificent formation, flattered vanity, and imperious egotism. She was as a bird gazing spell-bound on a gay young boa-constrictor, darting from bough to bough, sunning its brilliant hues, and showing off all its beauty, just before it takes the bird for its breakfast.

When they parted that night their intimacy had made so much progress that arrangements had been made for its continuance. Arabella had an instinctive foreboding that her father would be less charmed than herself with Jasper Losely; that, if Jasper were presented to him, he would possibly forbid her farther acquaintance with a young clerk, however superb his outward appearance. She took the first false step. She had a maiden aunt by the mother's side, who lived in Bloomsbury, gave and went to small parties, to which Jasper could easily get introduced. She arranged to pay a visit for some weeks to this aunt, who was then very civil to her, accepting with marked kindness seasonable presents of strawberries, pines, spring chickens, and so forth, and offering in turn, whenever it was convenient, a spare room, and whatever amusement a round of small parties, and the innocent flirtations incidental thereto, could bestow. Arabella said nothing to her father about Jasper Losely, and to her

aunt's she went. Arabella saw Jasper very often; they became engaged to each other, exchanged vows and love-tokens, locks of hair, etc. Jasper, already much troubled by duns, became naturally ardent to insure his felicity and Arabella's supposed fortune. Arabella at last summoned courage, and spoke to her father. To her delighted surprise, Mr. Fossett, after some moralizing, more on the uncertainty of life in general than her clandestine proceedings in particular, agreed to see Mr. Jasper Losely, and asked him down to dinner. After dinner, over a bottle of Lafitte, in an exceedingly plain but exceedingly weighty silver jug, which made Jasper's mouth water (I mean the jug), Mr. Fossett, commencing with that somewhat coarse though royal saying of William the Conqueror, with which he had before edified his daughter, assured Jasper that he gave his full consent to the young gentleman's nuptials with Arabella, provided Jasper or his relations would maintain her in a plain respectable way, and wait for her fortune till his (Fossett's) will was read. What that fortune would be, Mr. Fossett declined even to hint. Jasper went away very much cooled. Still the engagement went on. The nuptials were tacitly deferred. Jasper and his relations maintain a wife! Preposterous idea! It would take a Clan of relations and a Zenana of wives to maintain in that state to which he deemed himself entitled—Jasper himself! But just as he was meditating the possibility of a compromise with old Fossett, by which he would agree to wait till the will was read for contingent advantages, provided Fossett, in his turn, would agree in the mean while to afford lodging and board, with a trifle for pocket-money, to Arabella and himself, in the Clapham Villa, which, though not partial to rural scenery, Jasper preferred, on the whole, to a second floor in the city—old Fossett fell ill, took to his bed; was unable to attend to his business, some one else attended to it; and the consequence was, that the house stopped payment, and was discovered to have been insolvent for the last ten years. Not a discreditable bankruptcy. There might, perhaps, be seven shillings in the pound ultimately paid, and not more than forty families irretrievably ruined. Old Fossett, safe in his bed, bore the affliction with philosophical composure; observed to Arabella that he had always warned her of the ups and downs in this sphere of trial; referred again with pride to her first-rate education; commended again to her care Tom and Biddy; and, declaring that he died in charity with all men, resigned himself to the last slumber.

Arabella at first sought a refuge with her maiden aunt. But that lady, though not hit in pocket by her brother-in-law's failure, was more vehement against his memory than his most injured creditor—not only that she deemed herself unjustly defrauded of the pines, strawberries, and spring chickens, by which she had been enabled to give small parties at small cost, though with ample show, but that she was robbed of the consequence she had hitherto derived from the supposed expectations of her niece. In short, her welcome was so hostile, and her condolences so cutting, that Arabella quitted her door with a solemn determination never again to enter it

And now the nobler qualities of the bankrupt's daughter rose at once into play. Left penniless, she resolved by her own exertions to support and to rear her young brother and sister. The great school to which she had been the ornament willingly received her as a teacher, until some more advantageous place in a private family, and with a salary worthy of her talents and accomplishments, could be found. Her intercourse with Jasper became necessarily suspended. She had the generosity to write, offering to release him from his engagement. Jasper considered himself fully released without that letter; but he deemed it neither gallant nor discreet to say so. Arabella might obtain a situation with larger salary than she could possibly need, the superfluities whereof Jasper might undertake to invest. Her aunt had evidently something to leave, though she might have nothing to give. In fine, Arabella, if not rich enough for a wife, might be often rich enough for a friend at need; and so long as he was engaged to her for life, it must be not more her pleasure than her duty to assist him to live. Besides, independently of these prudential though not ardent motives for declaring unalterable fidelity to troth, Jasper at that time really did entertain what he called love for the handsome young woman—flattered that one of attainments so superior to all the girls he had ever known should be so proud even less of his affection for her than her own affection for himself. Thus the engagement lasted—interviews none—letters frequent. Arabella worked hard, looking to the future; Jasper worked as little as possible, and was very much bored by the present.

Unhappily, as it turned out, so great a sympathy, not only among the teachers, but among her old school-fellows, was felt for Arabella's reverse—her character for steadiness as well as talent stood so high, and there was something so creditable in her resolution to maintain her orphan brother and sister—that an effort was made to procure her a livelihood much more lucrative, and more independent, than she could obtain either in a school or a family. Why not take a small house of her own, live there with her fellow-orphans, and give lessons out by the hour? Several families at once agreed so to engage her, and an income adequate to all her wants was assured. Arabella adopted this plan. She took the house; Bridget Greggs, the nurse of her infancy, became her servant, and soon to that house, stealthily in the shades of evening, glided Jasper Losely. She could not struggle against his influence—had not the heart to refuse his visits—he was so poor—in such scrapes—and professed himself to be so unhappy. There now became some one else to toil for, besides the little brother and sister. But what were Arabella's gains to a man who already gambled! New afflictions smote her. A contagious fever broke out in the neighborhood; her little brother caught it; her little sister sickened the next day; in less than a week two small coffins were borne from her door by the Black Horses—borne to that plot of sunny turf in the pretty suburban cemetery, bought with the last earnings made for the little ones by the mother-like sister — Motherless, lone survivor! what! no friend on earth, no soother but that

direful Jasper! Alas! the truly dangerous Venus is not that Erycina round whom circle Jest and Laughter. Sorrow, and that sense of solitude which makes us welcome a footstep as a child left in the haunting dark welcomes the entrance of light—weaken the outworks of female virtue more than all the vain levities of mirth, or the flatteries which follow the path of Beauty through the crowd. Alas, and alas! Let the tale hurry on!

Jasper Losely has still more solemnly sworn to marry his adored Arabella. But when? When they are rich enough. She feels as if her spirit was gone — as if she could work no more. She was no weak, commonplace girl, whom love can console for shame. She had been rigidly brought up; her sense of female rectitude was keen; her remorse was noiseless, but it was stern. Harassments of a more vulgar nature beset her; she had forestalled her sources of income; she had contracted debts for Jasper's sake: in vain, her purse was emptied, yet his no fuller. His creditors pressed him; he told her that he must hide. One winter's day he thus departed: she saw him no more for a year. She heard, a few days after he left her, of his father's crime and committal. Jasper was sent abroad by his maternal uncle, at his father's prayer; sent to a commercial house in France, in which the uncle obtained him a situation. In fact, the young man had been dispatched to France under another name, in order to save him from the obloquy which his father had brought upon his own.

Soon came William Losely's trial and sentence. Arabella felt the disgrace acutely—felt how it would affect the audacious, insolent Jasper; did not wonder that he forebore to write to her. She conceived him bowed by shame, but she was buoyed up by her conviction that they should meet again. For good or for ill, she held herself bound to him for life. But meanwhile the debts she had incurred on his account came upon her. She was forced to dispose of her house; and at this time Mrs. Lyndsay, looking out for some first-rate superior governess for Matilda Darrell, was urged by all means to try and secure for that post Arabella Fossett. The highest testimonials from the school at which she had been reared, from the most eminent professional masters, from the families at which she had recently taught, being all brought to bear upon Mr. Darrell, he authorized Mrs. Lyndsay to propose such a salary as could not fail to secure a teacher of such rare qualifications. And thus Arabella became governess to Miss Darrell.

There is a kind of young lady of whom her nearest relations will say, "I can't make that girl out." Matilda Darrell was that kind of young lady. She talked very little; she moved very noiselessly; she seemed to regard herself as a secret which she had solemnly sworn not to let out. She had been steeped in slyness from her early infancy by a sly mother. Mrs. Darrell was a woman who had always something to conceal. There was always some note to be thrust out of sight; some visit not to be spoken of; something or other which Matilda was not on any account to mention to Papa.

When Mrs. Darrell died, Matilda was still a child, but she still continued to view her father as a person against whom prudence demanded her to be constantly on her guard. It was not that she was exactly afraid of him—he was very gentle to her, as he was to all children; but his loyal nature was antipathetic to hers. She had no sympathy with him. How confide her thoughts to him? She had an instinctive knowledge that those thoughts were not such as could harmonize with his. Yet, though taciturn, uncaressing, undemonstrative, she appeared mild and docile. Her reserve was ascribed to constitutional timidity. Timid to a degree she usually seemed; yet, when you thought you had solved the enigma, she said or did something so coolly determined, that you were forced again to exclaim, "I can't make that girl out!" She was not quick at her lessons. You had settled in your mind that she was dull, when, by a chance remark, you were startled to find that she was very sharp; keenly observant, when you had fancied her fast asleep. She had seemed, since her mother's death, more fond of Mrs. Lyndsay and Caroline than of any other human beings —always appeared sullen or out of spirits when they were absent; yet she confided to them no more than she did to her father. You would suppose from this description that Matilda could inspire no liking in those with whom she lived. Not so; her very secretiveness had a sort of attraction—a puzzle always creates some interest. Then her face, though neither handsome nor pretty, had in it a treacherous softness—a subdued, depressed expression. A kind observer could not but say with an indulgent pity, "There must be a good deal of heart in that girl, if one could but—make her out."

She appeared to take at once to Arabella, more than she had taken to Mrs. Lyndsay, or even to Caroline, with whom she had been brought up as a sister, but who, then joyous and quick and innocently fearless—with her soul in her eyes and her heart on her lips—had no charm for Matilda, because there she saw no secret to penetrate, and her she had no object in deceiving.

But this stranger, of accomplishments so rare, of character so decided, with a settled gloom on her lip, a gathered care on her brow—*there* was some one to study, and some one with whom she felt a sympathy; for she detected at once that Arabella was also a secret.

At first, Arabella, absorbed in her own reflections, gave to Matilda but the mechanical attention which a professional teacher bestows on an ordinary pupil. But an interest in Matilda sprung up in her breast, in proportion as she conceived a venerating gratitude for Darrell. He was aware of the pomp and circumstance which had surrounded her earlier years; he respected the creditable energy with which she had devoted her talents to the support of the young children thrown upon her care; compassionated her bereavement of those little fellow-orphans for whom toil had been rendered sweet; and he strove, by a kindness of forethought and a delicacy of attention, which were the more prized in a man so eminent and so preoccupied, to make her forget that she was a salaried teacher—to place her saliently, and as a matter of course, in the position of gentlewoman, guest, and friend. Recognizing in her a certain vigor and force of intellect apart from her mere ac-

complishments, he would flatter her scholastic pride, by referring to her memory in some question of reading, or consulting her judgment on some point of critical taste. She, in return, was touched by his chivalrous kindness to the depth of a nature that, though already seriously injured by its unhappy contact with a soul like Jasper's, retained that capacity of gratitude, the loss of which is humanity's last depravation. Nor this alone: Arabella was startled by the intellect and character of Darrell into that kind of homage which a woman, who has hitherto met but her own intellectual inferiors, renders to the first distinguished personage in whom she recognizes, half with humility and half with awe, an understanding and a culture to which her own reason is but the flimsy glass-house, and her own knowledge but the forced exotic.

Arabella, thus roused from her first listlessness, sought to requite Darrell's kindness by exerting every energy to render his insipid daughter an accomplished woman. So far as mere ornamental education extends, the teacher was more successful than, with all her experience, her skill, and her zeal, she had presumed to anticipate. Matilda, without ear or taste, or love for music, became a very fair mechanical musician. Without one artistic predisposition, she achieved the science of perspective—she attained even to the mixture of colors—she filled a portfolio with drawings which no young lady need have been ashamed to see circling round a drawing-room. She carried Matilda's thin mind to the farthest bound it could have reached without snapping, through an elegant range of selected histories and harmless feminine classics —through Gallic dialogues—through Tuscan themes—through Teuton verbs—yea, across the invaded bounds of astonished Science into the Elementary Ologies. And all this being done, Matilda Darrell was exactly the same creature that she was before. In all that related to character, to inclinations, to heart, even that consummate teacher could give no intelligible answer, when Mrs. Lyndsay, in her softest accents (and no accents ever were softer), sighed—"Poor, dear Matilda! can *you* make her out, Miss Fossett?" Miss Fossett could not make her out. But, after the most attentive study, Miss Fossett had inly decided that there was nothing to make out—that, like many other very nice girls, Matilda Darrell was a harmless nullity, what you call "a miss." White deal or willow, to which Miss Fossett had done all in the way of increasing its value as ornamental furniture, when she had veneered it over with rosewood or satin-wood, enriched its edges with ormolu, and strewed its surface with nicknacks and albums. But Arabella firmly believed Matilda Darrell to be a quiet, honest, good sort of "miss," on the whole—very fond of her, Arabella. The teacher had been several months in Darrell's family, when Caroline Lyndsay, who had been almost domesticated with Matilda (sharing the lessons bestowed on the latter, whether by Miss Fossett or visiting masters), was taken away by Mrs. Lyndsay on a visit to the old Marchioness of Montfort. Matilda, who was to come out the next year, was thus almost exclusively with Arabella, who redoubled all her pains to veneer the white deal, and protect with ormolu its feeble edges—so that, when it "came out," all should admire that thoroughly fashionable piece of furniture. It was the habit of Miss Fossett and her pupil to take a morning walk in the quiet retreats of the Green Park; and one morning as they were thus strolling, nursery-maids and children, and elderly folks, who were ordered to take early exercise, undulating round their unsuspecting way—suddenly, right upon their path (unlooked-for as the wolf that startled Horace in the Sabine wood, but infinitely more deadly than that runaway animal), came Jasper Losely! Arabella uttered a faint scream. She could not resist—had no thought of resisting—the impulse to bound forward—lay her hand on his arm. She was too agitated to perceive whether his predominant feeling was surprise or rapture. A few hurried words were exchanged, while Matilda Darrell gave one side-long glance toward the handsome stranger, and walked quietly by them. On his part, Jasper said that he had just returned to London—that he had abandoned forever all idea of a commercial life—that his father's misfortune (he gave that gentle appellation to the incident of penal transportation) had severed him from all former friends, ties, habits—that he had dropped the name of Losely forever—entreated Arabella not to betray it—his name now was Hammond—his "prospects," he said, "fairer than they had ever been." Under the name of Hammond, as an independent gentleman, he had made friends more powerful than he could ever have made under the name of Losely as a city clerk. He blushed to think he had ever been a city clerk. No doubt he should get into some Government office; and then, oh then, with assured income, and the certainty to rise, he might claim the longed-for hand of the "best of creatures."

On Arabella's part, she hastily explained her present position. She was governess to Miss Darrell—that was Miss Darrell. Arabella must not leave her walking on by herself—she would write to him. Addresses were exchanged—Jasper gave a very neat card—"Mr. Hammond, No. ——, Duke Street, St. James's."

Arabella, with a beating heart, hastened to join her friend. At the rapid glance she had taken of her perfidious lover, she thought him, if possible, improved. His dress, always studied, was more to the fashion of polished society, more simply correct—his air more decided. Altogether he looked prosperous, and his manner had never been more seductive, in its mixture of easy self-confidence and hypocritical coaxing. In fact, Jasper had not been long in the French commercial house—to which he had been sent out of the way while his father's trial was proceeding and the shame of it fresh —before certain licenses of conduct had resulted in his dismissal. But, meanwhile, he had made many friends among young men of his own age—those loose wild *viveurs* who, without doing any thing the law can punish as dishonest, contrive for a few fast years to live very showily on their wits. In that strange social fermentation which still prevails in a country where an aristocracy of birth, exceedingly impoverished, and exceedingly numerous so far as the right to prefix a *De* to the name, or to stamp a coronet on the card, can constitute an aristocrat—is diffused among an ambitious, adventurous, restless, and not inelegant young democracy

—each cemented with the other by that fiction of law called *égalité;* in that yet unsettled and struggling society in which so much of the old has been irretrievably destroyed, and so little of the new has been solidly constructed—there are much greater varieties, infinitely more subtle grades and distinctions, in the region of life which lies between respectability and disgrace, than can be found in a country like ours. The French novels and dramas may apply less a mirror than a magnifying-glass to the beings that move through that region. But still those French novels and dramas do not unfaithfully represent the classifications of which they exaggerate the types. Those strange combinations, into one tableau, of students and grisettes, opera-dancers, authors, viscounts, swindlers, romantic Lorettes, gamblers on the Bourse, whose pedigree dates from the Crusades; impostors, taking titles from villages in which their grandsires might have been saddlers; and if detected, the detection but a matter of laugh; delicate women living like lawless men; men making trade out of love, like dissolute women, yet with point of honor so nice, that, doubt their truth or their courage, and—piff! you are in Charon's boat, humanity in every civilized land may present single specimens, more or less, answering to each thus described. But where, save in France, find them all, if not precisely in the same *salons*, yet so crossing each other to and fro, as to constitute a social phase, and give color to a literature of unquestionable genius? And where, over orgies so miscellaneously Berycynthian, an atmosphere so elegantly Horatian? And where can coarseness so vanish into polished expression as in that diamond-like language—all terseness and sparkle—which, as friendly to Wit in its airiest prose, as hostile to Passion in its torrent or cloud wrack of poetry, seems invented by the Grace out of spite to the Muse?

Into circles such as those of which the dim outline is here so imperfectly sketched, Jasper Losely niched himself, as *le bel Anglais*. (Pleasant representative of the English nation!) Not that those circles are to have the sole credit of his corruption. No! Justice is justice! Stand we up for our native land! *Le bel Anglais* entered those circles a much greater knave than most of those whom he found there. But there, at least, he learned to set a yet higher value on his youth, and strength, and comeliness—on his readiness of resource—on the reckless audacity that brow-beat timid and some even valiant men—on the six feet one of faultless symmetry that captivated foolish, and some even sensible women. Gaming was, however, his vice by predilection. A month before Arabella met him he had had a rare run of luck. On the strength of it he had resolved to return to London, and (wholly oblivions of "the best of creatures" till she had thus startled him) hunt out and swoop off with an heiress. Three French friends accompanied him. Each had the same object. Each believed that London swarmed with heiresses. They were all three fine-looking men. One was a Count—at least he said so. But proud of his rank? not a bit of it: all for liberty (no man more likely to lose it)—all for fraternity (no man you would less love as a brother). And as for *égalité!* the son of a shoemaker who was *homme de lettres*, and wrote in a journal, inserted a jest on the Count's countship. "All men are equal before the pistol," said the Count; and knowing that, in that respect, he was equal to most, having practiced at *poupées* from the age of fourteen, he called out the son of Crispin and shot him through the lungs. Another of Jasper's traveling friends was an *enfant du peuple*—boasted that he was a foundling. He made verses of lugubrious strain, and taught Jasper how to shuffle at whist. The third, like Jasper, had been designed for trade; and, like Jasper, he had a soul above it. In politics he was a Communist—in talk a Philanthropist. He was the cleverest man of them all, and is now at the galleys. The fate of his two compatriots—more obscure—it is not my duty to discover. In that peculiar walk of life Jasper is as much as I can possibly manage.

It need not be said that Jasper carefully abstained from reminding his old city friends of his existence. It was his object and his hope to drop all identity with that son of a convict who had been sent out of the way to escape humiliation. In this resolve he was the more confirmed because he had no old city friends out of whom any thing could be well got. His poor uncle, who alone of his relations in England had been privy to his change of name, was dead; his end hastened by grief for William Losely's disgrace, and the bad reports he had received from France of the conduct of William Losely's son. That uncle had left, in circumstances too straitened to admit the waste of a shilling, a widow of very rigid opinions; who, if ever by some miraculous turn in the wheel of fortune she could have become rich enough to slay a fatted calf, would never have given the shinbone of it to a prodigal like Jasper, even had he been her own penitent son, instead of a graceless step-nephew. Therefore, as all civilization proceeds westward, Jasper turned his face from the east; and had no more idea of recrossing Temple Bar in search of fortune, friends, or kindred, than a modern Welshman would dream of a pilgrimage to Asian shores to re-embrace those distant relatives whom Hu Gadarn left behind him countless centuries ago, when that mythical chief conducted his faithful Cymrians over the Hazy Sea to this happy Island of Honey.*

Two days after his *rencontre* with Arabella in the Green Park, the *soi-disant* Hammond, having, in the interim, learned that Darrell was immensely rich, and Matilda his only surviving child, did not fail to find himself in the Green Park again—and again—and again!

Arabella, of course, felt how wrong it was to allow him to accost her, and walk by one side of her while Miss Darrell was on the other. But she felt, also, as if it would be much more wrong to slip out and meet him alone. Not for worlds would she again have placed herself in such peril. To refuse to meet him at all?—she had not strength enough for *that!* Her joy at seeing him was so immense. And nothing could be more respectful than Jasper's manner and conversation. Whatever of warmer and more impassioned sentiment was exchanged be-

* *Mel Ynnys*—Isle of Honey. One of the poetic names given to England in the language of the ancient Britons.

tween them passed in notes. Jasper had suggested to Arabella to pass him off to Matilda as some near relation. But Arabella refused all such disguise. Her sole claim to self-respect was in considering him solemnly engaged to her—the man she was to marry. And, after the second time they thus met, she said to Matilda, who had not questioned her by a word—by a look—"I was to be married to that gentleman before my father died; we are to be married as soon as we have something to live upon."

Matilda made some commonplace but kindly rejoinder. And thus she became raised into Arabella's confidence—so far as that confidence could be given, without betraying Jasper's real name, or one darker memory in herself. Luxury, indeed, it was to Arabella to find, at last, some one to whom she could speak of that betrothal in which her whole future was invested—of that affection which was her heart's sheet-anchor—of that home, humble it might be, and far off, but to which Time rarely fails to bring the Two, if never weary of the trust, to become as One. Talking thus, Arabella forgot the relationship of pupil and teacher; it was as woman to woman—girl to girl—friend to friend. Matilda seemed touched by the confidence—flattered to possess at last another's secret. Arabella was a little chafed that she did not seem to admire Jasper as much as Arabella thought the whole world must admire. Matilda excused herself. "She had scarcely noticed Mr. Hammond. Yes; she had no doubt he would be considered handsome; but she owned, though it might be bad taste, that she preferred a pale complexion, with auburn hair;" and then she sighed and looked away, as if she had, in the course of her secret life, encountered some fatal pale complexion, with never-to-be-forgotten auburn hair. Not a word was said by either Matilda or Arabella as to concealing from Mr. Darrell these meetings with Mr. Hammond. Perhaps Arabella could not stoop to ask that secrecy; but there was no necessity to ask. Matilda was always too rejoiced to have something to conceal.

Now, in these interviews, Jasper scarcely ever addressed himself to Matilda; not twenty spoken words could have passed between them; yet, in the very third interview, Matilda's sly fingers had closed on a sly note. And from that day, in each interview, Arabella walking in the centre, Jasper on one side, Matilda the other—behind Arabella's back—passed the sly fingers and the sly notes, which Matilda received and answered. Not more than twelve or fourteen times was even this interchange effected. Darrell was about to move to Fawley. All such meetings would be now suspended. Two or three mornings before that fixed for leaving London Matilda's room was found vacant. She was gone. Arabella was the first to discover her flight, the first to learn its cause. Matilda had left on her writing-table a letter for Miss Fossett. It was very short, very quietly expressed, and it rested her justification on a note from Jasper, which she inclosed—a note in which that gallant hero, ridiculing the idea that he could ever have been in love with Arabella, declared that he would destroy himself if Matilda refused to fly. *She* need not fear such angelic confidence in him. No! Even

"Had he a heart for falsehood framed,
He ne'er could injure her."

Stifling each noisier cry—but panting—gasping—literally half out of her mind, Arabella rushed into Darrell's study. He, unsuspecting man, calmly bending over his dull books, was startled by her apparition. Few minutes sufficed to tell him all that it concerned him to learn. Few brief questions, few passionate answers, brought him to the very worst.

Who, and what, was this Mr. Hammond? Heaven of heavens! the son of William Losely—of a transported felon!

Arabella exulted in a reply which gave her a moment's triumph over the rival who had filched from her such a prize. Roused from his first misery and sense of abasement in this discovery, Darrell's wrath was naturally poured, not on the fugitive child, but on the frontless woman, who, buoyed up by her own rage and sense of wrong, faced him, and did not cower. She, the faithless governess, had presented to her pupil this convict's son in another name; she owned it—she had trepanned into the snares of so vile a fortune-hunter, an ignorant child—she might feign amaze—act remorse—she must have been the man's accomplice. Stung, amidst all the bewilderment of her anguish, by this charge, which, at least, she did not deserve, Arabella tore from her bosom Jasper's recent letters to herself—letters all devotion and passion—placed them before Darrell, and bade him read. Nothing thought she then of name and fame. Nothing but of her wrongs and of her woes. Compared to herself, Matilda seemed the perfidious criminal—she the injured victim. Darrell but glanced over the letters; they were signed "your loving husband."

"What is this?" he exclaimed, "are you married to the man?"

"Yes," cried Arabella, "in the eyes of Heaven!"

To Darrell's penetration there was no mistaking the significance of those words, and that look; and his wrath redoubled. Anger in him, when once roused, was terrible; he had small need of words to vent it. His eye withered, his gesture appalled. Conscious but of one burning firebrand in brain and heart—of a sense that youth, joy, and hope were for ever gone, that the world could never be the same again—Arabella left the house, her character lost, her talents useless, her very means of existence stopped. Who henceforth would take *her* to teach? Who henceforth place their children under *her* charge?

She shrank into a gloomy lodging—she shut herself up alone with her despair. Strange though it may seem, her anger against Jasper was slight as compared with the intensity of her hate to Matilda. And stranger still it may seem, that as her thoughts recovered from their first chaos, she felt more embittered against the world, more crushed by a sense of shame, and yet galled by a no less keen sense of injustice, in recalling the scorn with which Darrell had rejected all excuse for her conduct in the misery it had occasioned her, than she did by the consciousness of her own lamentable errors. As in Darrell's esteem there was something that, to those who could appreciate it, seemed invaluable, so in his contempt to those who had cherish-

ed that esteem there was a weight of ignominy, as if a judge had pronounced a sentence that outlaws the rest of life.

Arabella had not much left out of her munificent salary. What she had hitherto laid by had passed to Jasper—defraying, perhaps, the very cost of his flight with her treacherous rival. When her money was gone, she pawned the poor relics of her innocent happy girlhood, which she had been permitted to take from her father's home, and had borne with her wherever she went, like household gods,—the prize-books, the lute, the costly work-box, the very bird-cage, all which the reader will remember to have seen in her later life, the books never opened, the lute broken, the bird long, long, long vanished from the cage! Never did she think she should redeem those pledges from that Golgotha, which takes, rarely to give back, so many hallowed tokens of the dreamland called "better days" —the trinkets worn at the first ball, the ring that was given with the earliest love-vow—yea, even the very bells and coral that pleased the infant in its dainty cradle, and the very Bible in which the lips that now bargain for sixpence more, read to some gray-haired father on his bed of death!

Soon the sums thus miserably raised were as miserably doled away. With a sullen apathy the woman contemplated famine. She would make no effort to live—appeal to no relations, no friends. It was a kind of vengeance she took on others, to let herself drift on to death. She had retreated from lodging to lodging, each obscurer, more desolate than the other. Now, she could no longer pay rent for the humblest room; now, she was told to go forth—whither? She knew not—cared not—took her way toward the river, as by that instinct which, when the mind is diseased, tends toward self-destruction, scarce less involuntarily than it turns, in health, toward self-preservation. Just as she passed under the lamplight at the foot of Westminster Bridge, a well-dressed man looked at her, and seized her arm. She raised her head with a chilly, melancholy scorn, as if she had received an insult—as if she feared that the man knew the stain upon her name, and dreamed, in his folly, that the dread of death might cause her to sin again.

"Do you not know me?" said the man; "more strange that I should recognize you! Dear, dear!—and what a dress!—how you *are* altered! Poor thing!"

At the words "Poor thing!" Arabella burst into tears; and in those tears the heavy cloud on her brain seemed to melt away.

"I have been inquiring, seeking for you every where, Miss," resumed the man. "Surely you know me now! Your poor aunt's lawyer! She is no more—died last week. She has left you all she had in the world; and a very pretty income it is, too, for a single lady."

Thus it was that we find Arabella installed in the dreary comforts of Podden Place. "She exchanged," she said, "in honor to her aunt's memory, her own name for that of Crane, which her aunt had borne—her own mother's maiden name." She assumed, though still so young, that title of "Mrs." which spinsters, grown venerable, moodily adopt when they desire all mankind to know that henceforth they relinquish the vanities of tender misses—that, become mistress of themselves, they defy and spit upon our worthless sex, which, whatever its repentance, is warned that it repents in vain. Most of her aunt's property was in houses, in various districts of Bloomsbury. Arabella moved from one to the other of these tenements, till she settled for good into the dullest of all. To make it duller yet, by contrast with the past, the Golgotha for once gave up its buried treasures—broken lute, birdless cage!

Somewhere about two years after Matilda's death, Arabella happened to be in the office of the agent who collected her house-rents, when a well-dressed man entered, and, leaning over the counter, said—"There is an advertisement in to-day's *Times* about a lady who offers a home, education, and so forth, to any little motherless girl; terms moderate, as said lady loves children for their own sake. Advertiser refers to your office for particulars—give them!"

The agent turned to his books; and Arabella turned toward the inquirer. "For whose child do you want a home, Jasper Losely?"

Jasper started. "Arabella! Best of creatures! And can you deign to speak to such a vil——"

"Hush—let us walk. Never mind the advertisement of a stranger. I may find a home for a motherless child—a home that will cost you nothing."

She drew him into the street. "But can this be the child of—of—Matilda Darrell?"

"Bella!" replied, in coaxing accents, that most execrable of lady-killers, "can I trust you? — can you be my friend in spite of my having been such a very sad dog? But money —what can one do without money in this world? 'Had I a heart for falsehood framed, it would ne'er have injured you'—if I had not been so cursedly hard up! And indeed now, if you would but condescend to forgive and forget, perhaps some day or other we may be Darby and Joan—only, you see, just at this moment I am really not worthy of such a Joan. You know, of course, that I am a widower—not inconsolable."

"Yes; I read of Mrs. Hammond's death in an old newspaper."

"And you did not read of her baby's death, too—some weeks afterward?"

"No; it is seldom that I see a newspaper. Is the infant dead?"

"Hum—you shall hear." And Jasper entered into a recital, to which Arabella listened with attentive interest. At the close she offered to take herself the child for whom Jasper sought a home. She informed him of her change of name and address. The wretch promised to call that evening with the infant; but he sent the infant, and did not call. Nor did he present himself again to her eyes, until, several years afterward, those eyes so luridly welcomed him to Podden Place. But though he did not even condescend to write to her in the mean while, it is probable that Arabella contrived to learn more of his habits and mode of life at Paris than she intimated when they once more met face to face.

And now the reader knows more than Alban Morley, or Guy Darrell perhaps ever will know, of the grim woman in iron gray.

CHAPTER X.

"Sweet are the uses of Adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head."

Most persons will agree that the toad is ugly and venomous, but few indeed are the persons who can boast of having actually discovered that "precious jewel in its head" which the poet assures us is placed there. But calamity may be classed in two great divisions—1st. The afflictions, which no prudence can avert; 2d, The misfortunes, which men take all possible pains to bring upon themselves. Afflictions of the first class may but call forth our virtues, and result in our ultimate good. Such is the adversity which may give us the jewel. But to get at the jewel we must kill the toad. Misfortunes of the second class but too often increase the errors or the vices by which they were created. Such is the adversity which is all toad and no jewel. If you choose to breed and fatten your own toads, the increase of the venom absorbs every bit of the jewel.

Never did I know a man who was an habitual gambler, otherwise than notably inaccurate in his calculations of probabilities in the ordinary affairs of life. Is it that such a man has become so chronic a drunkard of hope, that he sees double every chance in his favor?

Jasper Losely had counted upon two things as matters of course.

1st. Darrell's speedy reconciliation with his only child.

2d. That Darrell's only child must of necessity be Darrell's heiress.

In both these expectations the gambler was deceived.

Darrell did not even answer the letters that Matilda addressed to him from France, to the shores of which Jasper had borne her, and where he had hastened to make her his wife under his assumed name of Hammond, but his true Christian name of Jasper.

In the disreputable marriage Matilda had made all the worst parts of her character seemed suddenly revealed to her father's eye, and he saw what he had hitherto sought not to see, the true child of a worthless mother. A mere *mésalliance*, if palliated by long or familiar acquaintance with the object, however it might have galled him, his heart might have pardoned; but here, without even a struggle of duty, without the ordinary coyness of maiden pride, to be won with so scanty a wooing, by a man who she knew was betrothed to another—the dissimulation, the perfidy, the combined effrontery and meanness of the whole transaction, left no force in Darrell's eyes to the commonplace excuses of inexperience and youth. Darrell would not have been Darrell if he could have taken back to his home or his heart a daughter so old in deceit, so experienced in thoughts that dishonor.

Darrell's silence, however, little saddened the heartless bride, and little dismayed the sanguine bridegroom. Both thought that pardon and plenty were but the affair of time—a little more or little less. But their funds rapidly diminished; it became necessary to recruit them. One can't live in hotels entirely upon hope. Leaving his bride for a while in a pleasant provincial town, not many hours distant from Paris, Jasper returned to London, intent upon seeing Darrell himself; and should the father-in-law still defer articles of peace, Jasper believed that he could have no trouble in raising a present supply upon such an El Dorado of future expectations. Darrell at once consented to see Jasper, not at his own house, but at his solicitor's. Smothering all opposing disgust, the proud gentleman deemed this condescension essential to the clear and definite understanding of those resolves upon which depended the worldly station and prospects of the wedded pair.

When Jasper was shown into Mr. Gotobed's office, Darrell was alone, standing near the hearth, and by a single quiet gesture repelled that tender rush toward his breast which Jasper had elaborately prepared; and thus for the first time the two men saw each other, Darrell perhaps yet more resentfully mortified while recognizing those personal advantages in the showy profligate which had rendered a daughter of his house so facile a conquest: Jasper (who had chosen to believe that a father-in-law so eminent must necessarily be old and broken) shocked into the most disagreeable surprise by the sight of a man still young, under forty, with a countenance, a port, a presence, that in any assemblage would have attracted the general gaze from his own brilliant self, and looking altogether as unfavorable an object, whether for pathos or for post-obits, as unlikely to breathe out a blessing or to give up the ghost, as the worst brute of a father-in-law could possibly be. Nor were Darrell's words more comforting than his aspect.

"Sir, I have consented to see you, partly that you may learn from my own lips once for all that I admit no man's right to enter my family without my consent, and that consent you will never receive, and partly that, thus knowing each other by sight, each may know the man it becomes him most to avoid. The lady who is now your wife is entitled by my marriage-settlement to the reversion of a small fortune at my death; nothing more from me is she likely to inherit. As I have no desire that she to whom I once gave the name of daughter should be dependent wholly on yourself for bread, my solicitor will inform you on what conditions I am willing, during my life, to pay the interest of the sum which will pass to your wife at my death. Sir, I return to your hands the letters that lady has addressed to me, and which, it is easy to perceive, were written at your dictation. No letter from her will I answer. Across my threshold her foot will never pass. Thus, Sir, concludes all possible intercourse between you and myself; what rests is between you and that gentleman."

Darrell had opened a side-door in speaking the last words—pointed toward the respectable form of Mr. Gotobed standing tall beside his tall desk—and, before Jasper could put in a word, the father-in-law was gone.

With becoming brevity Mr. Gotobed made Jasper fully aware that not only all Mr. Darrell's funded or personal property was entirely at his own disposal—that not only the large landed estates he had purchased (and which Jasper had vaguely deemed inherited and in strict entail) were in the same condition—condition enviable to the proprietor, odious to the bridegroom of the proprietor's sole daughter; but that even the fee-simple of the poor Fawley Manor-House and lands was vested in Darrell, encumbered only by the portion of £10,000 which the late Mrs. Darrell had brought to her

husband, and which was settled, at the death of herself and Darrell, on the children of the marriage.

In the absence of marriage-settlements between Jasper and Matilda, that sum at Darrell's death was liable to be claimed by Jasper, in right of his wife, so as to leave no certainty that provision would remain for the support of his wife and family; and the contingent reversion might, in the mean time, be so dealt with as to bring eventful poverty on them all.

"Sir," said the lawyer, "I will be quite frank with you. It is my wish, acting for Mr. Darrell, so to settle this sum of £10,000 on your wife, and any children she may bear you, as to place it out of your power to anticipate or dispose of, even with Mrs. Hammond's consent. If you part with that power, not at present a valuable one, you are entitled to compensation. I am prepared to make that compensation liberal. Perhaps you would prefer communicating with me through your own solicitor. But I should tell you, that the terms are more likely to be advantageous to you, in proportion as negotiation is confined to us two. It might, for instance, be expedient to tell your solicitor that your true name (I beg you a thousand pardons) is not Hammond. That is a secret which, the more you can keep it to yourself, the better I think it will be for you. We have no wish to blab it out."

Jasper by this time had somewhat recovered the first shock of displeasure and disappointment; and with that quickness which so erratically darted through a mind that contrived to be dull when any thing honest was addressed to its apprehension, he instantly divined that his real name of Losely was worth something. He had no idea of resuming—was, indeed, at that time anxious altogether to ignore and eschew it; but he had a right to it, and a man's rights are not to be resigned for nothing. Accordingly, he said with some asperity, "I shall resume my family name whenever I choose it. If Mr. Darrell does not like his daughter to be called Mrs. Jasper Losely—or all the malignant tittle-tattle which my poor father's unfortunate trial might provoke—he must, at least, ask me as a favor to retain the name I have temporarily adopted—a name in my family, Sir. A Losely married a Hammond, I forget when—generations ago—you'll see it in the Baronetage. My grandfather, Sir Julian, was not a crack lawyer, but he was a baronet of as good birth as any in the country; and my father, Sir"—(Jasper's voice trembled)—"my father," he repeated, fiercely striking his clenched hand on the table, "was a gentleman every inch of his body; and I'll pitch any man out of the window who says a word to the contrary!"

"Sir," said Mr. Gotobed, shrinking toward the bell-pull, "I think, on the whole, I had better see your solicitor."

Jasper cooled down at that suggestion; and, with a slight apology for natural excitement, begged to know what Mr. Gotobed wished to propose. To make an end of this part of the story, after two or three interviews, in which the two negotiators learned to understand each other, a settlement was legally completed, by which the sum of £10,000 was inalienably settled on Matilda, and her children by her marriage with Jasper; in case he survived her, the interest was to be his for life—in case she died childless, the capital would devolve to himself at Darrell's decease. Meanwhile, Darrell agreed to pay £500 a year, as the interest of the £10,000 at five per cent, to Jasper Hammond, or his order, provided always that Jasper and his wife continued to reside together, and fixed that residence abroad.

By a private verbal arrangement, not even committed to writing, to this sum was added another £200 a year, wholly at Darrell's option and discretion. It being clearly comprehended that these words meant so long as Mr. Hammond kept his own secret, and so long, too, as he forbore directly, or indirectly, to molest, or even to address the person at whose pleasure it was held. On the whole, the conditions to Jasper were sufficiently favorable: he came into an income immeasurably beyond his right to believe that he should ever enjoy; and sufficient—well managed—for even a fair share of the elegances as well as comforts of life, to a young couple blessed in each other's love, and remote from the horrible taxes and emulous gentilities of this opulent England, where, out of fear to be thought too poor, nobody is ever too rich.

Matilda wrote no more to Darrell. But some months afterward he received an extremely well-expressed note in French, the writer whereof represented herself as a French lady, who had very lately seen Madame Hammond—was now in London but for a few days, and had something to communicate, of such importance as to justify the liberty she took in requesting him to honor her with a visit. After some little hesitation, Darrell called on this lady. Though Matilda had forfeited his affection, he could not contemplate her probable fate without painful anxiety. Perhaps Jasper had ill-used her—perhaps she had need of shelter elsewhere. Though that shelter could not again be under a father's roof—and though Darrell would have taken no step to separate her from the husband she had chosen, still, in secret, he would have felt comparative relief and ease had she herself sought to divide her fate from one whose path downward in dishonor his penetration instinctively divined. With an idea that some communication might be made to him, to which he might reply that Matilda, if compelled to quit her husband, should never want the home and subsistence of a gentlewoman, he repaired to the house (a handsome house in a quiet street, temporarily occupied by the French lady). A tall *chasseur*, in full costume, opened the door—a page ushered him into the drawing-room. He saw a lady—young—and with all the grace of a *Parisienne* in her manner—who, after some exquisitely-turned phrases of excuse, showed him (as a testimonial of the intimacy between herself and Madame Hammond) a letter she had received from Matilda, in a very heart-broken, filial strain, full of professions of penitence—of a passionate desire for her father's forgiveness—but far from complaining of Jasper, or hinting at the idea of deserting a spouse, with whom, but for the haunting remembrance of a beloved parent, her lot would be blessed indeed. Whatever of pathos was deficient in the letter, the French lady supplied by such apparent fine feeling, and by so many touching little traits of

Matilda's remorse, that Darrell's heart was softened in spite of his reason. He went away, however, saying very little, and intending to call no more. But another note came. The French lady had received a letter from a mutual friend—"Matilda," she feared, "was dangerously ill." This took him again to the house, and the poor French lady seemed so agitated by the news she had heard—and yet so desirous not to exaggerate nor alarm him needlessly, that Darrell suspected his daughter was really dying, and became nervously anxious himself for the next report. Thus, about three or four visits in all necessarily followed the first one. Then Darrell abruptly closed the intercourse, and could not be induced to call again. Not that he for an instant suspected that this amiable lady, who spoke so becomingly, and whose manners were so high-bred, was other than the well-born Baroness she called herself, and looked to be, but partly because, in the last interview, the charming *Parisienne* had appeared a little to forget Matilda's alarming illness, in a, not forward but still, coquettish desire to centre his attention more upon herself; and the moment she did so, he took a dislike to her which he had not before conceived; and partly because his feelings having recovered the first effect which the vision of a penitent pining, dying daughter could not fail to produce, his experience of Matilda's duplicity and falsehood made him discredit the penitence, the pining, and the dying. The Baroness might not willfully be deceiving him—Matilda might be willfully deceiving the Baroness. To the next note, therefore, dispatched to him by the feeling and elegant foreigner, he replied but by a dry excuse—a stately hint that family matters could never be satisfactorily discussed except in family councils, and that if her friend's grief or illness were really in any way occasioned by a belief in the pain her choice of life might have inflicted on himself, it might comfort her to know that that pain had subsided, and that his wish for her health and happiness was not less sincere, because henceforth he could neither watch over the one nor administer to the other. To this note, after a day or two, the Baroness replied by a letter so beautifully worded, I doubt whether Madame de Sévigné could have written in purer French, or Madame de Staël with a finer felicity of phrase. Stripped of the graces of diction, the substance was but small; "Anxiety for a friend so beloved—so unhappy—more pited even than before, now that the Baroness had been enabled to see how fondly a daughter must idolize a father in the man whom a nation revered!—(here two lines devoted to compliment personal)—compelled by that anxiety to quit even sooner than she had first intended the metropolis of that noble country," etc.—(here four lines devoted to compliment national)—and then proceeding through some charming sentences about patriot altars and domestic hearths, the writer suddenly checked herself—"would intrude no more on time sublimely dedicated to the human race—and concluded with the assurance of sentiments the most *distinguées*." Little thought Darrell that this complimentary stranger, whom he never again beheld, would exercise an influence over that portion of his destiny which then seemed to him most secure from evil; toward which, then, he looked for the balm to every wound—the compensation to every loss!

Darrell heard no more of Matilda, till, not long afterward, her death was announced to him. She had died from exhaustion shortly after giving birth to a female child. The news came upon him at a moment when, from other causes—(the explanation of which, forming no part of his confidence to Alban, it will be convenient to reserve)—his mind was in a state of great affliction and disorder—when he had already buried himself in the solitudes of Fawley—ambition resigned and the world renounced—and the intelligence saddened and shocked him more than it might have done some months before. If, at that moment of utter bereavement, Matilda's child had been brought to him—given up to him to rear—would he have rejected it? would he have forgotten that it was a felon's grandchild? I dare not say. But his pride was not put to such a trial. One day he received a packet from Mr. Gotobed, inclosing the formal certificates of the infant's death, which had been presented to him by Jasper, who had arrived in London for that melancholy purpose, with which he combined a pecuniary proposition. By the death of Matilda and her only child, the sum of £10,000 absolutely reverted to Jasper in the event of Darrell's decease. As the interest meanwhile was continued to Jasper, that widowed mourner suggested "that it would be a great boon to himself and no disadvantage to Darrell if the principal were made over to him at once. He had been brought up originally to commerce. He had abjured all thoughts of resuming such vocation during his wife's lifetime, out of that consideration for her family and ancient birth which motives of delicacy imposed. Now that the connection with Mr. Darrell was dissolved, it might be rather a relief than otherwise to that gentleman to know that a son-in-law so displeasing to him was finally settled, not only in a foreign land, but in a social sphere, in which his very existence would soon be ignored by all who could remind Mr. Darrell that his daughter had once a husband. An occasion that might never occur again now presented itself. A trading firm at Paris, opulent, but unostentatiously quiet in its mercantile transactions, would accept him as a partner could he bring to it the additional capital of £10,000." Not without dignity did Jasper add, "that since his connection had been so unhappily distasteful to Mr. Darrell, and since the very payment, each quarter, of the interest on the sum in question must in itself keep alive the unwelcome remembrance of that connection, he had the less scruple in making a proposition which would enable the eminent personage who so disdained his alliance to get rid of him altogether." Darrell closed at once with Jasper's proposal, pleased to cut off from his life each tie that could henceforth link it to Jasper's, nor displeased to relieve his hereditary acres from every shilling of the marriage portion which was imposed on it as a debt, and associated with memories of unmingled bitterness. Accordingly, Mr. Gotobed, taking care first to ascertain that the certificates as to the poor child's death were genuine, accepted Jasper's final release of all claim on Mr. Darrell's estate.

There still, however, remained the £200 a year which Jasper had received during Matilda's life, on the tacit condition of remaining Mr. Hammond, and not personally addressing Mr. Darrell. Jasper inquired "if that annuity was to continue?" Mr. Gotobed referred the inquiry to Darrell, observing that the object for which this extra allowance had been made was rendered nugatory by the death of Mrs. Hammond and her child; since Jasper henceforth could have neither power nor pretext to molest Mr. Darrell, and that it could signify but little what name might in future be borne by one whose connection with the Darrell family was wholly dissolved. Darrell impatiently replied, "That nothing having been said as to the withdrawal of the said allowance in case Jasper became a widower, he remained equally entitled, in point of honor, to receive that allowance, or an adequate equivalent."

This answer being intimated to Jasper, that gentleman observed "that it was no more than he had expected from Mr. Darrell's sense of honor," and apparently quite satisfied, carried himself and his £10,000 back to Paris. Not long after, however, he wrote to Mr. Gotobed that "Mr. Darrell, having alluded to an equivalent for the £200 a year allowed to him, evidently implying that it was as disagreeable to Mr. Darrell to see that sum entered quarterly in his banker's books, as it had to see there the quarterly interest of the £10,000, so Jasper might be excused in owning that he should prefer an equivalent. The commercial firm to which he was about to attach himself required a somewhat larger capital on his part than he had anticipated. etc., etc. Without presuming to dictate any definite sum, he would observe that £1500, or even £1000, would be of more avail to his views and objects in life than an annuity of £200 a year, which, being held only at will, was not susceptible of a temporary loan." Darrell, wrapped in thoughts wholly remote from recollections of Jasper, chafed at being thus recalled to the sense of that person's existence, wrote back to the solicitor who transmitted to him this message, "that an annuity held on his word was not to be calculated by Mr. Hammond's notions of its value. That the £200 a year should therefore be placed on the same footing as the £500 a year that had been allowed on a capital of £10,000; that accordingly it might be held to represent a principal of £4000, for which he inclosed a check, begging Mr. Gotobed not only to make Mr. Hammond fully understand that there ended all possible accounts or communication between them, but never again to trouble him with any matters whatsoever in reference to affairs that were thus finally concluded." Jasper, receiving the £4000, left Darrell and Gotobed in peace till the following year. He then addressed to Gotobed an exceedingly plausible, business-like letter. "The firm he had entered, in the silk trade, was in the most flourishing state—an opportunity occurred to purchase a magnificent mulberry plantation in Provence, with all requisite *maynanières*, etc., which would yield an immense increase of profit. That if, to insure him to have a share in this lucrative purchase, Mr. Darrell could accommodate him for a year with a loan of £2000 or £3000, he sanguinely calculated on attaining so high a position in the commercial world, as, though it could not render the recollection of his alliance more obtrusive to Mr. Darrell, would render it less humiliating."

Mr. Gotobed, in obedience to the peremptory instructions he had received from his client, did not refer this letter to Darrell, but having occasion at that time to visit Paris on other business, he resolved (without calling on Mr. Hammond) to institute there some private inquiry into that rising trader's prospects and status. He found, on arrival at Paris, these inquiries difficult. No one in either the *beau monde* or in the *haut commerce* seemed to know any thing about this Mr. Jasper Hammond. A few fashionable English *roués* remembered to have seen once or twice during Matilda's life, and shortly after her decease, a very fine-looking man shooting meteoric across some equivocal *salons*, or lounging in the *Champs Elysées*, or dining at the *Café de Paris*; but of late that meteor had vanished. Mr. Gotobed, then cautiously employing a commissioner to gain some information of Mr. Hammond's firm at the private residence from which Jasper addressed his letter, ascertained that in that private residence Jasper did not reside. He paid the porter to receive occasional letters, for which he called or sent; and the porter, who was evidently a faithful and discreet functionary, declared his belief that Monsieur Hammond lodged in the house in which he transacted business, though, where was the house, or what was the business, the porter observed, with well-bred implied rebuke, "Monsieur Hammond was too reserved to communicate, he himself too incurious to inquire." At length Mr. Gotobed's business, which was, in fact, a commission from a distressed father to extricate an imprudent son, a mere boy, from some unhappy associations, having brought him into the necessity of seeing persons who belonged neither to the *beau monde* nor to the *haut commerce*, he gleaned from them the information he desired. Mr. Hammond lived in the very heart of a certain circle in Paris, which but few Englishmen ever penetrate. In that circle Mr. Hammond had, on receiving his late wife's dowry, become the partner in a private gambling hell; in that hell had been ingulfed all the moneys he had received—a hell that ought to have prospered with him, if he could have economized his villainous gains. His senior partner in that firm retired into the country with a fine fortune—no doubt the very owner of those mulberry plantations which were now on sale! But Jasper scattered Napoleons faster than any *croupier* could rake them away. And Jasper's natural talent for converting solid gold into thin air had been assisted by a lady, who, in the course of her amiable life, had assisted many richer men than Jasper to lodgings in St. Pelagie, or cells in the Maison des Fous. With that lady he had become acquainted during the lifetime of his wife, and it was supposed that Matilda's discovery of this *liaison* had contributed perhaps to the illness which closed in her decease; the name of that lady was Gabrielle Desmarets. *She* might still be seen daily at the Bois de Boulogne, nightly at opera-house or theatre; *she* had apartments in the Chaussée d'Antin far

from inaccessible to Mr. Gotobed, if he coveted the honor of her acquaintance. But Jasper was less before an admiring world. He was supposed now to be connected with another gambling-house of lower grade than the last, in which he had contrived to break his own bank, and plunder his own till. It was supposed also that he remained good friends with Mademoiselle Desmarets; but if he visited her at her house, he was never to be seen there. In fact, his temper was so uncertain, his courage so dauntless, his strength so prodigious, that gentlemen who did not wish to be thrown out of a window, or hurled down a stair-case, shunned any salon or boudoir in which they had a chance to encounter him. Mademoiselle Desmarets had thus been condemned to the painful choice between his society and that of nobody else, or that of any body else with the rigid privation of his. Not being a turtle-dove, she had chosen the latter alternative. It was believed, however, that if ever Gabrielle Desmarets had known the weakness of a kind sentiment, it was for this turbulent lady-killer; and that, with a liberality she had never exhibited in any other instance, when she could no longer help him to squander, she would still, at a pinch, help him to live; though, of course, in such a reverse of the normal laws of her being, Mademoiselle Desmarets set those bounds on her own generosity which she would not have imposed upon his, and had said with a sigh, "I could forgive him if he beat me and beggared my friends; but to beat my friends and to beggar me—*that* is not the kind of love which makes the world go round!"

Scandalized to the last nerve of his respectable system by the information thus gleaned, Mr. Gotobed returned to London. More letters from Jasper—becoming urgent, and at last even insolent—Mr. Gotobed, worried into a reply, wrote back shortly "that he could not even communicate such applications to Mr. Darrell, and that he must peremptorily decline all further intercourse, epistolary or personal, with Mr. Hammond."

Darrell, on returning from one of the occasional rambles on the Continent, "remote, unfriended, melancholy," by which he broke the monotony of his Fawley life, found a letter from Jasper, not fawning, but abrupt, addressed to himself, complaining of Mr. Gotobed's improper tone, requesting pecuniary assistance, and intimating that he could in return communicate to Mr. Darrell an intelligence that would give him more joy than all his wealth could purchase. Darrell inclosed that note to Mr. Gotobed; Mr. Gotobed came down to Fawley to make those revelations of Jasper's mode of life which were too delicate, or too much the reverse, to commit to paper. Great as Darrell's disgust at the memory of Jasper had hitherto been, it may well be conceived how much more bitter became that memory now. No answer was, of course, vouchsafed to Jasper, who, after another extremely forcible appeal for money, and equally enigmatical boast of the pleasurable information it was in his power to bestow, relapsed into sullen silence.

One day, somewhat more than five years after Matilda's death, Darrell, coming in from his musing walks, found a stranger waiting for him. This stranger was William Losely, returned from penal exile; and while Darrell, on hearing this announcement, stood mute with haughty wonder that such a visitor could cross the threshold of his father's house, the convict began what seemed to Darrell a story equally audacious and incomprehensible—the infant Matilda had borne to Jasper, and the certificates of whose death had been so ceremoniously produced and so prudently attested, lived still! Sent out to nurse as soon as born, the nurse had in her charge another babe, and this last was the child who had died and been buried as Matilda Hammond's. The elder Losely went on to stammer out a hope that his son was not at the time aware of the fraudulent exchange, but had been deceived by the nurse—that it had not been a premeditated imposture of his own to obtain his wife's fortune.

When Darrell came to this part of his story, Alban Morley's face grew more seriously interested. "Stop!" he said; "William Losely assured you of his own conviction that this strange tale was true. What proofs did he volunteer?"

"Proofs! Death, man, do you think that at such moments I was but a bloodless lawyer, to question and cross-examine? I could but bid the impostor leave the house which his feet polluted."

Alban heaved a sigh, and murmured, too low for Darrell to overhear, "Poor Willy!" then aloud, "But, my dear friend, bear with me one moment. Suppose that, by the arts of this diabolical Jasper, the exchange really had been effected, and a child to your ancient line lived still, would it not be a solace, a comfort—"

"Comfort!" cried Darrell, "comfort in the perpetuation of infamy! The line I promised my father to restore to its rank in the land, to be renewed in the grandchild of a felon!—in the child of the yet viler sharper of a hell!—You, gentleman and soldier, call that thought—'comfort?' Oh, Alban!—out on you! Fie! fie! No!—leave such a thought to the lips of a William Losely! He indeed, clasping his hands, faltered forth some such word; he seemed to count on my forlorn privation of kith and kindred—no heir to my wealth—no representative of my race—would I deprive myself of—ay—your very words—of a solace—a comfort! He asked me, at least, to inquire."

"And you answered?"

"Answered so as to quell and crush in the bud all hopes in the success of so flagrant a falsehood—answered, 'Why inquire? Know that, even if your tale were true, I have no heir, no representative, no descendant in the child of Jasper—the grandchild of William—Losely. I can at least leave my wealth to the son of Charles Haughton. True, Charles Haughton was a spendthrift—a gamester; but he was neither a professional cheat nor a convicted felon.'"

"You said that—oh, Darrell!"

The Colonel checked himself. But for Charles Haughton, the spendthrift and gamester, would William Losely have been the convicted felon? He checked that thought, and hurried on—"And how did William Losely reply?"

"He made no reply—he skulked away without a word."

Darrell then proceeded to relate the interview which Jasper had forced on him at Fawley dur-

ing Lionel's visit there—on Jasper's part, an attempt to tell the same tale as William had told—on Darrell's part, the same scornful refusal to hear it out. "And," added Darrell, "the man, finding it thus impossible to dupe my reason, had the inconceivable meanness to apply to me for alms. I could not better show the disdain in which I held himself and his story than in recognizing his plea as a mendicant. I threw my purse at his feet, and so left him.

"But," continued Darrell, his brow growing darker and darker, "but wild and monstrous as the story was, still the idea that it MIGHT be true—a supposition which derived its sole strength from the character of Jasper Losely—from the interest he had in the supposed death of a child that alone stood between himself and the money he longed to grasp—an interest which ceased when the money itself was gone, or rather changed into the counter-interest of proving a life that, he thought, would re-establish a hold on me—still, I say, an idea that the story *might* be true, would force itself on my fears, and if so, though my resolution never to acknowledge the child of Jasper Losely as a representative, or even as a daughter, of my house, would of course be immovable—yet it would become my duty to see that her infancy was sheltered, her childhood reared, her youth guarded, her existence amply provided for."

"Right—your plain duty," said Alban, bluntly. "Intricate sometimes are the obligations imposed on us as gentlemen; '*noblesse oblige*' is a motto which involves puzzles for a casuist; but our duties as men are plain—the idea very properly haunted you—and—"

"And I hastened to exorcise the spectre. I left England—I went to the French town in which poor Matilda died—I could not, of course, make formal or avowed inquiries of a nature to raise into importance the very conspiracy (if conspiracy there were) which threatened me. But I saw the physician who had attended both my daughter and her child—I saw those who had seen them both when living—seen them both when dead. The doubt on my mind was dispelled—not a pretext left for my own self-torment. The only person needful in evidence whom I failed to see was the nurse to whom the infant had been sent. She lived in a village some miles from the town—I called at her house—she was out. I left word I should call the next day—I did so—she had absconded. I might, doubtless, have traced her, but to what end, if she were merely Jasper's minion and tool? Did not her very flight prove her guilt and her terror? Indirectly I inquired into her antecedents and character. The inquiry opened a field of conjecture, from which I hastened to turn my eyes. This woman had a sister who had been in the service of Gabrielle Desmarets; and Gabrielle Desmarets had been in the neighborhood during my poor daughter's lifetime, and just after my daughter's death. And the nurse had had two infants under her charge; the nurse had removed with one of them to Paris—and Gabrielle Desmarets lived in Paris—and, oh, Alban, if there be really in flesh and life a child by Jasper Losely to be forced upon my purse or my pity—is it his child, not by the ill-fated Matilda, but by the vile woman for whom Matilda, even in the first year of wedlock, was deserted? Conceive how credulity itself would shrink appalled from the horrible snare!—I to acknowledge, adopt, proclaim as the last of the Darrells, the adulterous offspring of a Jasper Losely and a Gabrielle Desmarets!—or, when I am in my grave, some claim advanced upon the sum settled by my marriage articles on Matilda's issue, and which, if a child survived, could not have been legally transferred to its father—a claim with witnesses suborned—a claim that might be fraudulently established—a claim that would leave the representative—not indeed of my lands and wealth, but, more precious far, of my lineage and blood—in—in the person of—of—"

Darrell paused, almost stifling, and became so pale that Alban started from his seat in alarm.

"It is nothing," resumed Darrell, faintly; "and, ill or well, I must finish this subject now, so that we need not reopen it.

"I remained abroad, as you know, for some years. During that time two or three letters from Jasper Losely were forwarded to me; the latest in date more insolent than all preceding ones. It contained demands as if they were rights, and insinuated threats of public exposure, reflecting on myself and my pride—'He was my son-in-law after all, and if he came to disgrace the world should know the tie.' Enough. This is all I knew until the man who now, it seems, thrusts himself forward as Jasper Losely's friend or agent, spoke to me the other night at Mrs. Haughton's. That man you have seen, and you say that he—"

"Represents Jasper's poverty as extreme; his temper unscrupulous and desperate; that he is capable of any amount of scandal or violence. It seems that though at Paris he has (Poole believes) still preserved the name of Hammond, yet that in England he has resumed that of Losely; seems, by Poole's date of the time on which he, Poole, made Jasper's acquaintance, to have done so after his baffled attempt on you at Fawley—whether in so doing he intimated the commencement of hostilities, or whether, as is more likely, the sharper finds it convenient to have one name in one country, and one in another, 'tis useless to inquire; enough that the identity between the Hammond who married poor Matilda and the Jasper Losely whose father was transported, that unscrupulous rogue has no longer any care to conceal. It is true that the revelation of this identity would now be of slight moment to a man of the world—as thick-skinned as myself, for instance; but to you it would be disagreeable—there is no denying that—and therefore, in short, when Mr. Poole advises a compromise, by which Jasper could be secured from want and yourself from annoyance, I am of the same opinion as Mr. Poole is."

"You are?"

"Certainly. My dear Darrell, if in your secret heart there was something so galling in the thought that the man who had married your daughter, though without your consent, was not merely the commonplace adventurer whom the world supposed, but the son of that poor dear—I mean, that rascal who was transported. Jasper too, himself a cheat and a sharper—if this

galled you so that you have concealed the true facts from myself, your oldest friend, till this day—if it has cost you even now so sharp a pang to divulge the true name of that Mr. Hammond, whom our society never saw, whom even gossip has forgotten in connection with yourself —how intolerable would be your suffering to have this man watching for you in the streets, some wretched girl in his hand, and crying out, 'A penny for your son-in-law and your grandchild!' Pardon me—I must be blunt. You can give him to the police—send him to the tread-mill. Does that mend the matter? Or, worse still, suppose the man commits some crime that fills all the newspapers with his life and adventures, including, of course, his runaway marriage with the famous Guy Darrell's heiress —no one would blame you, no one respect you less; but do not tell me that you would not be glad to save your daughter's name from being coupled with such a miscreant's, at the price of half your fortune."

"Alban," said Darrell, gloomily, "you can say nothing on this score that has not been considered by myself. But the man has so placed the matter that honor itself forbids me to bargain with him for the price of my name. So long as he threatens, I can not buy off a threat —so long as he persists in a story by which he would establish a claim on me on behalf of a child whom I have every motive, as well as every reason, to disown as inheriting my blood — whatever I bestowed on himself would seem like hush-money to suppress that claim."

"Of course—I understand, and entirely agree with you. But if the man retract all threats, confess his imposture in respect to this pretended offspring, and consent to retire for life to a distant colony, upon an annuity that may suffice for his wants, but leave no surplus beyond, to render more glaring his vices, or more effective his powers of evil—if this could be arranged between Mr. Poole and myself, I think that your peace might be permanently secured without the slightest sacrifice of honor. Will you leave the matter in my hands, on this assurance — that I will not give this person a farthing except on the conditions I have premised?"

"On these conditions, yes, and most gratefully," said Darrell. "Do what you will. But one favor more; never again speak to me (unless absolutely compelled) in reference to this dark portion of my inner life."

Alban pressed his friend's hand, and both were silent for some moments. Then said the Colonel, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "Darrell, more than ever now do I see that the new house at Fawley, so long suspended, must be finished. Marry again you must! You can never banish old remembrances unless you can supplant them by fresh hopes."

"I feel it—I know it!" cried Darrell, passionately. "And oh! if one remembrance *could* be wrenched away! But it shall—it shall!"

"Ah!" thought Alban, "the remembrance of his former conjugal life!—a remembrance which might well make the youngest and the boldest Benedict shrink from the hazard of a similar experiment."

In proportion to the delicacy, the earnestness, the depth of a man's nature, will there be a something in his character which no male friend can conceive, and a something in the secrets of his life which no male friend can ever conjecture.

CHAPTER XI.

Our old friend the Pocket Cannibal evinces unexpected patriotism and philosophical moderation, contented with a steak off his own succulent friend in the airs of his own native sky.

Colonel Morley had a second interview with Mr. Poole. It needed not Alban's knowledge of the world to discover that Poole was no partial friend to Jasper Losely; that, for some reason or other, Poole was no less anxious than the Colonel to get that formidable client, whose cause he so warmly advocated, pensioned and packed off into the region most remote from Great Britain, in which a spirit hitherto so restless might consent to settle. And although Mr. Poole had evidently taken offense at Mr. Darrell's discourteous rebuff of his amiable intentions, yet no grudge against Darrell furnished a motive for conduct equal to his Christian desire that Darrell's peace should be purchased by Losely's perpetual exile. Accordingly, Colonel Morley took leave, with a well-placed confidence in Poole's determination to do all in his power to induce Jasper to listen to reason. The Colonel had hoped to learn something from Poole of the elder Losely's present residence and resources. Poole, as we know, could give him there no information. The Colonel also failed to ascertain any particulars relative to that female pretender on whose behalf Jasper founded his principal claim to Darrell's aid. And so great was Poole's embarrassment in reply to all questions on that score — Where was the young person? With whom had she lived? What was she like? Could the Colonel see her, and hear her own tale? — that Alban entertained a strong suspicion that no such girl was in existence; that she was a pure fiction and myth; or that, if Jasper were compelled to produce some petticoated fair, she would be an artful baggage hired for the occasion.

Poole waited Jasper's next visit with impatience and sanguine delight. He had not a doubt that the ruffian would cheerfully consent to allow that, on farther inquiry, he found he had been deceived in his belief of Sophy's parentage, and that there was nothing in England so peculiarly sacred to his heart but what he might consent to breathe the freer air of Columbian skies, or even to share the shepherd's harmless life amidst the pastures of auriferous Australia! But, to Poole's ineffable consternation, Jasper declared sullenly that he would not consent to expatriate himself merely for the sake of living.

"I am not so young as I was," said the bravo; "I don't speak of years, but feeling. I have not the same energy; once I had high spirits—they are broken; once I had hope—I have none: I am not up to exertion; I have got into lazy habits. To go into new scenes, form new plans, live in a horrid raw new world, every body round me bustling and pushing—No! that may suit your thin dapper light Hop-o'-my-thumbs! Look at me! See how I have increased in weight the last five years—all solid bone and muscle. I defy any four draymen to move me an inch if I

am not in the mind to it; and to be blown off to the antipodes as if I were the down of a pestilent thistle, I am not in the mind for *that*, Dolly Poole!"

"Hum!" said Poole, trying to smile. "This is funny talk. You always were a funny fellow. But I am quite sure, from Colonel Morley's decided manner, that you can get nothing from Darrell if you choose to remain in England."

"Well, when I have nothing else left, I may go to Darrell myself, and have that matter out with him. At present I am not up to it. Dolly, don't bore!" And the bravo, opening a jaw strong enough for any carnivorous animal, yawned—yawned much as a bored tiger does in the face of a philosophical student of savage manners in the Zoological Gardens.

"Bore!" said Poole, astounded, and recoiling from that expanded jaw. "But I should have thought no subject could bore you less than the consideration of how you are to live?"

"Why, Dolly, I have learned to be easily contented, and you see at present I live upon you."

"Yes," groaned Poole, "but that can't go on forever; and, besides, you promised that you would leave me in peace as soon as I had got Darrell to provide for you."

"So I will. Zounds, Sir, do you doubt my word? So I will. But I don't call exile 'a provision'—*Basta!* I understand from you that Colonel Morley offers to restore the niggardly £200 a year Darrell formerly allowed to me, to be paid monthly or weekly, through some agent in Van Diemen's Land, or some such uncomfortable half-way house to Eternity, that was not even in the Atlas when I studied geography at school. But £200 a year is exactly my income in England, paid weekly too, by your agreeable self, with whom it is a pleasure to talk over old times. Therefore that proposal is out of the question. Tell Colonel Morley, with my compliments, that if he will double the sum, and leave me to spend it where I please, I scorn haggling, and say 'done.' And as to the girl, since I can not find her (which, on penalty of being thrashed to a mummy, you will take care not to let out), I would agree to leave Mr. Darrell free to disown her. But are you such a dolt as not to see that I put the ace of trumps on my adversary's pitiful deuce, if I depose that my own child is not my own child, when all I get for it is what I equally get out of you, with my ace of trumps still in my hands? *Basta!*—I say again *Basta!* It is evidently an object to Darrell to get rid of all fear that Sophy should ever pounce upon him tooth and claw: if he be so convinced that she is not his daughter's child, why make a point of my saying that I told him a fib when I said she was? Evidently, too, he is afraid of my power to harass and annoy him; or why make it a point that I shall only nibble his cheese in a trap at the world's end, stared at by bushmen, and wombats, and rattlesnakes, and alligators, and other American citizens or British settlers? £200 a year, and my own wife's father a millionaire! The offer is an insult. Ponder this; put on the screw; make them come to terms which I can do them the honor to accept; meanwhile, I will trouble you for my four sovereigns."

Poole had the chagrin to report to the Colonel Jasper's refusal of the terms proposed, and to state the counter-proposition he was commissioned to make. Alban was at first surprised, not conjecturing the means of supply, in his native land, which Jasper had secured in the coffers of Poole himself. On sounding the unhappy negotiator as to Jasper's reasons, he surmised, however, one part of the truth—viz., that Jasper built hopes of better terms precisely on the fact that terms had been offered to him at all; and this induced Alban almost to regret that he had made any such overtures, and to believe that Darrell's repugnance to open the door of conciliation a single inch to so sturdy a mendicant, was more worldly-wise than Alban had originally supposed. Yet partly, even for Darrell's own security and peace, from that persuasion of his own powers of management which a consummate man of the world is apt to entertain, and partly from a strong curiosity to see the audacious son of that poor dear rascal Willy, and examine himself into the facts he asserted, and the objects he aimed at, Alban bade Poole inform Jasper that Colonel Morley would be quite willing to convince him, in a personal interview, of the impossibility of acceding to the propositions Jasper had made; and that he should be still more willing to see the young person whom Jasper asserted to be the child of his marriage.

Jasper, after a moment's moody deliberation, declined to meet Colonel Morley—partly, indeed, from the sensitive vanity which once had given him delight, and now only gave him pain. Meet thus—altered, fallen, imbruted—the fine gentleman whose calm eye had quelled him in the widow's drawing-room in his day of comparative splendor—that in itself was distasteful to the degenerated bravo. But he felt as if he should be at more disadvantage in point of argument with a cool and wary representative of Darrell's interests than he should be even with Darrell himself. And unable to produce the child whom he ascribed the right to obtrude, he should be but exposed to a fire of cross-questions without a shot in his own locker. Accordingly, he declined, point-blank, to see Colonel Morley; and declared that the terms he himself had proposed were the lowest he would accept. "Tell Colonel Morley, however, that if negotiations fail, *I* shall not fail, sooner or later, to argue my view of the points in dispute with my kind father-in-law, and in person."

"Yes, hang it!" cried Poole, exasperated; "go and see Darrell yourself. He is easily found."

"Ay," answered Jasper, with the hardest look of his downcast sidelong eye—"ay; some day or other it may come to that. I would rather not, if possible. I might not keep my temper. It is not merely a matter of money between us, if we two meet. There are affronts to efface. Banished his house like a mangy dog—treated by a jackanapes lawyer like the dirt in the kennel! The Loselys, I suspect, would have looked down on the Darrells fifty years ago; and what if my father was born out of wedlock, is the blood not the same? Does the breed dwindle down for want of a gold ring and priest? Look at me. No; not what I now am; not even as you saw me five years ago; but as I leaped into youth! Was I born to cast sums and nib pens as a City clerk? Aha, my poor father, you

were wrong there! Blood will out! Mad devil, indeed, is a racer in a citizen's gig! Spavined, and wind-galled, and foundered—let the brute go at last to the knackers; but by his eye, and his pluck, and his bone, the brute shows the stock that he came from!"

Dolly opened his eyes and—blinked. Never in his gaudy days had Jasper half so openly revealed what, perhaps, had been always a sore in his pride; and his outburst now may possibly aid the reader to a subtler comprehension of the arrogance, and levity, and egotism, which accompanied his insensibility to honor, and had converted his very claim to the blood of a gentleman into an excuse for a cynic's disdain of the very virtues for which a gentleman is most desirous of obtaining credit. But by a very ordinary process in the human mind, as Jasper had fallen lower and lower into the lees and dregs of fortune, his pride had more prominently emerged from the group of the other and more flaunting vices by which, in health and high spirits, it had been pushed aside and outshone.

"Humph!" said Poole, after a pause. "If Darrell was as uncivil to you as he was to me, I don't wonder that you owe him a grudge. But even if you do lose temper in seeing him, it might rather do good than not. You can make yourself cursedly unpleasant if you choose it; and perhaps you will have a better chance of getting your own terms if they see you can bite as well as bark! Set at Darrell and worry him; it is not fair to worry nobody but me!"

"Dolly, don't bluster! If I could stand at his door, or stop him in the streets, with the girl in my hand, your advice would be judicious. The world would not care for a row between a rich man and a penniless son-in-law. But an interesting young lady, who calls him grandfather, and falls at his knees, he could not send *her* to hard labor; and if he does not believe in her birth, let the thing but just get into the newspapers, and there are plenty who will; and I should be in a very different position for treating. 'Tis just because, if I meet Darrell again, I don't wish that again it should be all bark and no bite, that I postpone the interview. All your own laziness—exert yourself and find the girl."

"But I can't find the girl, and you know it! And I tell you what, Mr. Losely, Colonel Morley, who is a very shrewd man, does not believe in the girl's existence."

"Does not he! I begin to doubt it myself. But, at all events, you can't doubt of mine, and I am grateful for yours; and since you have given me the trouble of coming here to no purpose, I may as well take the next week's pay in advance—four sovereigns, if you please, Dolly Poole."

CHAPTER XII.

Another halt—Change of Horses—and a turn on the road.

Colonel Morley, on learning that Jasper declined a personal conference with himself, and that the proposal of an interview with Jasper's alleged daughter was equally scouted or put aside, became still more confirmed in his belief that Jasper had not yet been blessed with a daughter sufficiently artful to produce. And pleased to think that the sharper was thus unprovided with a means of annoyance, which, skillfully managed, might have been seriously harassing; and convinced that when Jasper found no farther notice taken of him, he himself would be compelled to petition for the terms he now rejected, the Colonel dryly informed Poole "that his interference was at an end; that if Mr. Losely, either through himself, or through Mr. Poole, or any one else, presumed to address Mr. Darrell direct, the offer previously made would be peremptorily and irrevocably withdrawn. I myself," added the Colonel, "shall be going abroad very shortly, for the rest of the summer; and should Mr. Losely, in the mean while, think better of a proposal which secures him from want, I refer him to Mr. Darrell's solicitor. To that proposal, according to your account of his destitution, he must come sooner or later; and I am glad to see that he has in yourself so judicious an adviser"—a compliment which by no means consoled the miserable Poole.

In the briefest words, Alban informed Darrell of his persuasion that Jasper was not only without evidence to support a daughter's claim, but that the daughter herself was still in that part of Virgil's Hades appropriated to souls that have not yet appeared upon the upper earth, and that Jasper himself, although holding back, as might be naturally expected, in the hope of conditions more to his taste, had only to be left quietly to his own meditations in order to recognize the advantages of emigration. Another £100 a year or so, it is true, he might bargain for, and such a demand might be worth conceding. But, on the whole, Alban congratulated Darrell upon the probability of hearing very little more of the son-in-law, and no more at all of the son-in-law's daughter.

Darrell made no comment nor reply. A grateful look, a warm pressure of the hand, and, when the subject was changed, a clearer brow and livelier smile, thanked the English Alban better than all words.

CHAPTER XIII.

Colonel Morley shows that it is not without reason that he enjoys his reputation of knowing something about every body.

"Well met," said Darrell, the day after Alban had conveyed to him the comforting assurances which had taken one thorn from his side—dispersed one cloud in his evening sky. "Well met," said Darrell, encountering the Colonel a few paces from his own door. "Pray walk with me as far as the New Road. I have promised Lionel to visit the studio of an artist friend of his, in whom he chooses to find a Raffaelle, and in whom I suppose, at the price of truth, I shall be urbanely compelled to compliment a daubber."

"Do you speak of Frank Vance?"

"The same!"

"You could not visit a worthier man, nor compliment a more promising artist. Vance is one of the few who unite *gusto* and patience, fancy and brushwork. His female heads, in especial, are exquisite, though they are all, I con-

fess, too much like one another. The man himself is a thoroughly fine fellow. He has been much made of in good society, and remains unspoiled. You will find his manner rather offhand, the reverse of shy; partly, perhaps, because he has in himself the racy freshness and boldness which he gives to his colors; partly, perhaps, also, because he has in his art the self-esteem that patricians take from their pedigree, and shakes a duke by the hand to prevent the duke holding out to him a finger."

"Good," said Darrell, with his rare, manly laugh. "Being shy myself, I like men who meet one half-way. I see that we shall be at our ease with each other."

"And perhaps still more when I tell you that he is connected with an old Eton friend of ours, and deriving great benefit from that connection; you remember poor Sidney Branthwaite?"

"To be sure. He and I were great friends at Eton—somewhat in the same position of pride and poverty. Of all the boys in the school we two had the least pocket-money. Poor Branthwaite! I lost sight of him afterward. He went into the Church, got only a curacy, and died young."

"And left a son, poorer than himself, who married Frank Vance's sister."

"You don't say so. The Branthwaites were of good old family; what is Mr. Vance's?"

"Respectable enough. Vance's father was one of those clever men who have too many strings to their bow. He, too, was a painter; but he was also a man of letters, in a sort of a way—had a share in a journal, in which he wrote Criticisms on the Fine Arts. A musical composer, too. Rather a fine gentleman, I suspect, with a wife who was rather a fine lady. Their house was much frequented by artists and literary men: old Vance, in short, was hospitable—his wife extravagant. Believing that posterity would do that justice to his pictures which his contemporaries refused, Vance left to his family no other provision. After selling his pictures and paying his debts, there was just enough left to bury him. Fortunately, Sir ——, the great painter of that day, had already conceived a liking to Frank Vance—then a mere boy—who had shown genius from an infant, as all true artists do. Sir —— took him into his studio, and gave him lessons. It would have been unlike Sir ——, who was open-hearted but close-fisted, to give any thing else. But the boy contrived to support his mother and sister. That fellow, who is now as arrogant a stickler for the dignity of art as you or my Lord Chancellor may be for that of the bar, stooped then to deal clandestinely with fancy-shops, and imitate Watteau on fans. I have now two hand-screens that he painted for a shop in Rathbone Place. I suppose he may have got 10*s.* for them, and now any admirer of Frank's would give £100 apiece for them."

"That is the true soul in which genius lodges, and out of which fire springs," cried Darrell, cordially. "Give me the fire that lurks in the flint, and answers by light the stroke of the hard steel. I'm glad Lionel has won a friend in such a man. Sidney Branthwaite's son married Vance's sister—after Vance had won reputation?"

"No; while Vance was still a boy. Young Arthur Branthwaite was an orphan. If he had any living relations, they were too poor to assist him. He wrote poetry much praised by the critics (they deserve to be hanged, those critics!)—scribbled, I suppose, in old Vance's journal; saw Mary Vance a little before her father died; fell in love with her; and on the strength of a volume of verse, in which the critics all solemnly deposed to his surpassing riches—of imagination, rushed to the altar, and sacrificed a wife to the Muses! Those villainous critics will have a dark account to render in the next world! Poor Arthur Branthwaite! For the sake of our old friend his father, I bought a copy of his little volume. Little as the volume was, I could not read it through."

"What!—below contempt?"

"On the contrary, above comprehension. All poetry praised by critics nowadays is as hard to understand as a hieroglyphic. I own a weakness for Pope and common sense. I could keep up with our age as far as Byron; after him I was thrown out. However, Arthur was declared by the critics to be a great improvement on Byron—more 'poetical in form'—more 'æsthetically artistic'—more 'objective' or 'subjective' (I am sure I forget which, but it was one or the other, nonsensical, and not English) in his views of man and nature. Very possibly. All I know is—I bought the poems, but could not read them; the critics read them, but did not buy. All that Frank Vance could make by painting hand-screens and fans and album scraps he sent, I believe, to the poor poet; but I fear it did not suffice. Arthur, I suspect, must have been publishing another volume on his own account. I saw a Monody on something or other, by Arthur Branthwaite, advertised, and no doubt Frank's fans and hand-screens must have melted into the printer's bill. But the Monody never appeared: the poet died, his young wife too. Frank Vance remains a bachelor, and sneers at gentility—abhors poets—is insulted if you promise posthumous fame—gets the best price he can for his pictures—and is proud to be thought a miser. Here we are at his door."

CHAPTER XIV.

Romantic Love pathologically regarded by Frank Vance and Alban Morley.

Vance was before his easel, Lionel looking over his shoulder. Never was Darrell more genial than he was that day to Frank Vance. The two men took to each other at once, and talked as familiarly as if the retired lawyer and the rising painter were old fellow-travelers along the same road of life. Darrell was really an exquisite judge of art, and his praise was the more gratifying because discriminating. Of course he gave the due meed of panegyric to the female heads, by which the artist had become so renowned. Lionel took his kinsman aside, and, with a mournful expression of face, showed him the portrait by which all those varying ideals had been suggested—the portrait of Sophy as Titania.

"And that is Lionel," said the artist, pointing to the rough outline of Bottom.

"Pish!" said Lionel, angrily. Then turning

to Darrell—"This is *the* Sophy we have failed to find, Sir—is it not a lovely face?"

"It is, indeed," said Darrell. "But that nameless refinement in expression—that arch yet tender elegance in the simple, watchful attitude—these, Mr. Vance, must be your additions to the original."

"No, I assure you, Sir," said Lionel; "besides that elegance, that refinement, there was a delicacy in the look and air of that child, to which Vance failed to do justice. Own it, Frank."

"Reassure yourself, Mr. Darrell," said Vance, "of any fears which Lionel's enthusiasm might excite. He tells me that Titania is in America; yet, after all, I would rather he saw her again — no cure for love at first sight like a second sight of the beloved object after a long absence."

Darrel (somewhat gravely). "A hazardous remedy—it might kill if it did not cure."

Colonel Morley. "I suspect, from Vance's manner, that he has tested its efficacy on his own person."

Lionel. "No, *mon Colonel*—I'll answer for Vance. *He* in love! Never."

Vance colored—gave a touch to the nose of a Roman senator in the famous classical picture which he was then painting for a merchant at Manchester—and made no reply. Darrell looked at the artist with a sharp and searching glance.

Colonel Morley. "Then all the more credit to Vance for his intuitive perception of philosophical truth. Suppose, my dear Lionel, that we light, one idle day, on a beautiful novel, a glowing romance—suppose that, by chance, we are torn from the book in the middle of the interest—we remain under the spell of the illusion—we recall the scenes—we try to guess what should have been the sequel—we think that no romance ever was so captivating, simply because we were not allowed to conclude it. Well, if, some years afterward, the romance fall again in our way, and we open at the page where we left off, we cry, in the maturity of our sober judgment, 'Mawkish stuff!—is this the same thing that I once thought so beautiful?—how one's tastes do alter!'"

Darrell. "Does it not depend on the age in which one began the romance?"

Lionel. "Rather, let me think, Sir, upon the real depth of the interest—the true beauty of the—"

Vance (interrupting). "Heroine? — Not at all, Lionel. I once fell in love—incredible as it may seem to you—nine years ago last January. I was too poor then to aspire to any young lady's hand—therefore I did not tell my love, but 'let concealment,' et cetera, et cetera. She went away with her mamma to complete her education on the Continent. I remained 'Patience on a monument.' She was always before my eyes—the slenderest, shyest creature—just eighteen. I never had an idea that she could grow any older, less slender, or less shy. Well, four years afterward (just before we made our excursion into Surrey, Lionel), she returned to England, still unmarried. I went to a party at which I knew she was to be—saw her, and was cured."

"Bad case of small-pox, or what?" asked the Colonel, smiling.

Vance. "Nay; every body said she was extremely improved—that was the mischief—she had improved herself out of my fancy. I had been faithful as wax to one settled impression, and when I saw a fine, full-formed, young Frenchified lady, quite at her ease, armed with eye-glass and bouquet and bustle, away went my dream of the slim blushing maiden. The Colonel is quite right, Lionel; the romance once suspended, 'tis a haunting remembrance till thrown again in our way, but complete disillusion if we try to renew it; though I swear that in my case the interest was deep, and the heroine improved in her beauty. So with you and that dear little creature. See her again, and you'll tease me no more to give you that portrait of Titania at watch over Bottom's soft slumbers. All a Mid-summer Night's Dream, Lionel. Titania fades back into the arms of Oberon, and would not be Titania if you could make her—Mrs. Bottom."

CHAPTER XV.

Even Colonel Morley, knowing every body and every thing, is puzzled when it comes to the plain question —"What will he do with it?"

"I am delighted with Vance," said Darrell, when he and the Colonel were again walking arm in arm. "His is not one of those meagre intellects which have nothing to spare out of the professional line. He has humor. Humor—strength's rich superfluity."

"I like your definition," said the Colonel. "And humor in Vance, though fantastic, is not without subtlety. There was much real kindness in his obvious design to quiz Lionel out of that silly enthusiasm for—"

"For a pretty child, reared up to be a strolling player," interrupted Darrell. "Don't call it silly enthusiasm. I call it chivalrous compassion. Were it other than compassion, it would not be enthusiasm, it would be degradation. But do you believe, then, that Vance's confession of first love, and its cure, was but a whimsical invention?"

Colonel Morley. "Not so. Many a grave truth is spoken jestingly. "I have no doubt that, allowing for the pardonable exaggeration of a *raconteur*, Vance was narrating an episode in his own life."

Darrell. "Do you think that a grown man, who has ever really felt love, can make a jest of it, and to mere acquaintances?"

Colonel Morley. "Yes; if he be so thoroughly cured that he has made a jest of it to himself. And the more lightly he speaks of it, perhaps the more solemnly at one time he felt it. Levity is his revenge on the passion that fooled him."

Darrell. "You are evidently an experienced philosopher in the lore of such folly. '*Consultus insapientis sapientiæ.*' Yet I can scarcely believe that you have ever been in love."

"Yes, I have," said the Colonel, bluntly, "and very often! Every body at my age has—except yourself. So like a man's observation, *that*," continued the Colonel, with much tartness. "No man ever thinks another man capable of a profound and romantic sentiment!"

DARRELL. "True; I own my shallow fault, and beg you ten thousand pardons. So then you really believe, from your own experience, that there is much in Vance's theory and your own very happy illustration? Could we, after many years, turn back to the romance at the page at which we left off, we should—"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Not care a straw to read on! Certainly, half the peculiar charm of a person beloved must be ascribed to locality and circumstance."

DARRELL. "I don't quite understand you."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Then, as you liked my former illustration, I will explain myself by another one, more homely. In a room to which you are accustomed, there is a piece of furniture, or an ornament, which so exactly suits the place, that you say—'The prettiest thing I ever saw!' You go away—you return—the piece of furniture or the ornament has been moved into another room. You see it there, and you say—'Bless me, is that the thing I so much admired!' The strange room does not suit it—losing its old associations and accessories, it has lost its charm. So it is with human beings—seen in one place, the place would be nothing without them—seen in another, the place without them would be all the better!"

DARRELL (musingly). "There are some puzzles in life which resemble the riddles a child asks you to solve. Your imagination can not descend low enough for the right guess. Yet, when you are told, you are obliged to say—'How clever!' Man lives to learn."

"Since you have arrived at that conviction," replied Colonel Morley, amused by his friend's gravity, "I hope that you will rest satisfied with the experiences of Vance and myself; and that if you have a mind to propose to one of the young ladies whose merits we have already discussed, you will not deem it necessary to try what effect a prolonged absence might produce on your good resolution."

"No!" said Darrell, with sudden animation. "Before three days are over, my mind shall be made up."

"Bravo!—as to whom of the three you would ask in marriage?"

"Or as to the idea of ever marrying again. Adieu. I am going to knock at that door."

"Mr. Vyvyan's! Ah, is it so, indeed? Verily, you are a true Dare-all."

"Do not be alarmed. I go afterward to an exhibition with Lady Adela, and I dine with the Carr Viponts. My choice is not yet made, and my hand still free."

"His hand still free!" muttered the Colonel, pursuing his walk alone. "Yes—but, three days hence—What will he do with it?"

CHAPTER XVI.

Guy Darrell's Decision.

GUY DARRELL returned home from Carr Vipont's dinner at a late hour. On his table was a note from Lady Adela's father, cordially inviting Darrell to pass the next week at his country house. London was now emptying fast. On the table-tray was a parcel, containing a book which Darrell had lent to Miss Vyvyan some weeks ago, and a note from herself. In calling at her father's house that morning, he had learned that Mr. Vyvyan had suddenly resolved to take her into Switzerland, with the view of passing the next winter in Italy. The room was filled with loungers of both sexes. Darrell had staid but a short time. The leave-taking had been somewhat formal—Flora unusually silent. He opened her note, and read the first lines listlessly; those that followed, with a changing cheek and an earnest eye. He laid down the note very gently, again took it up, and reperused. Then he held it to the candle, and it dropped from his hand in tinder. "The innocent child," murmured he, with a soft paternal tenderness; "she knows not what she writes." He began to pace the room with his habitual restlessness when in solitary thought—often stopping—often sighing heavily. At length his face cleared—his lips became firmly set. He summoned his favorite servant. "Mills," said he, "I shall leave town on horseback as soon as the sun rises. Put what I may require for a day or two into the saddle-bags. Possibly, however, I may be back by dinner-time. Call me at five o'clock, and then go round to the stables. I shall require no groom to attend me."

The next morning, while the streets were deserted, no houses as yet astir, but the sun bright, the air fresh, Guy Darrell rode from his door. He did not return the same day, nor the next, nor at all. But, late in the evening of the second day, his horse, reeking-hot and evidently hard-ridden, stopped at the porch of Fawley Manor-House; and Darrell flung himself from the saddle, and into Fairthorn's arms. "Back again—back again—and to leave no more!" said he, looking round; "*Spes et Fortuna valete!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

A Man's Letter—unsatisfactory and provoking as a man's letters always are.

Guy Darrell to Colonel Morley.

FAWLEY MANOR-HOUSE, *August* 19, 18—.

I HAVE decided, my dear Alban. I did not take three days to do so, though the third day may be just over ere you learn my decision. I shall never marry again. I abandon that last dream of declining years. My object in returning to the London world was to try whether I could not find, among the fairest and most attractive women that the world produces—at least to an English eye—some one who could inspire me with that singleness of affection which could alone justify the hope that I might win, in return, a wife's esteem and a contented home. That object is now finally relinquished, and with it all idea of resuming the life of cities. I might have re-entered a political career, had I first secured to myself a mind sufficiently serene and healthful for duties that need the concentration of thought and desire. Such a state of mind I can not secure. I have striven for it; I am baffled. It is said that politics are a jealous mistress—that they require the whole man. The saying is not invariably true in the application it commonly receives—that is, a politician may have some other employment of intellect, which rather enlarges his powers than

distracts their political uses. Successful politicians have united with great parliamentary toil and triumph legal occupations or literary or learned studies. But politics do require that the heart should be free, and at peace from all more absorbing private anxieties — from the gnawing of a memory or a care, which dulls ambition and paralyzes energy. In this sense politics do require the whole man. If I returned to politics now, I should fail to them, and they to me. I feel that the brief interval between me and the grave has need of repose: I find that repose here. I have therefore given the necessary orders to dismiss the pompous retinue which I left behind me, and instructed my agent to sell my London house for whatever it may fetch. I was unwilling to sell it before —unwilling to abandon the hope, however faint, that I might yet regain strength for action. But the very struggle to obtain such strength leaves me exhausted more.

You may believe that it is not without a pang —less of pride than of remorse—that I resign unfulfilled the object toward which all my earlier life was so resolutely shaped. The house I had promised my father to refound dies to dust in my grave. To my father's blood no heir to my wealth can trace. Yet it is a consolation to think that Lionel Haughton is one on whom my father would have smiled approvingly. At my death, therefore, at least the old name will not die: Lionel Haughton will take and be worthy to bear it. Strange weakness of mine, you will say; but I can not endure the thought that the old name should be quite blotted out of the land. I trust that Lionel may early form a suitable and happy marriage. Sure that he will not choose ignobly, I impose no fetters on his choice.

One word only on that hateful subject, confided so tardily to your friendship, left so thankfully to your discretion. Now that I have once more buried myself in Fawley, it is very unlikely that the man it pains me to name will seek me here. If he does, he can not molest me as if I were in the London world. Continue, then, I pray you, to leave him alone. And in adopting your own shrewd belief that, after all, there is no such child as he pretends to claim, my mind becomes tranquilized on all that part of my private griefs.

Farewell, old school-friend! Here, so far as I can foretell—here, where my life began, it returns, when Heaven pleases, to close. Here I could not ask you to visit me: what is rest to me would be loss of time to you. But in my late and vain attempt to re-enter that existence in which you have calmly and wisely gathered round yourself "all that should accompany old age—honor, love, obedience, troops of friends" —nothing so repaid the effort—nothing now so pleasantly remains to recollection—as the brief renewal of that easy commune which men like me never know, save with those whose laughter brings back to them a gale from the old playground. "*Vive, vale;*" I will not add, "*Sis memor mei.*" So many my obligations to your kindness, that you will be forced to remember me whenever you recall the *not* "painful subjects" of early friendship and lasting gratitude. Recall only those when reminded of

GUY DARRELL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

No coinage in circulation so fluctuates in value as the worth of a Marriageable Man.

COLONEL MORLEY was not surprised (*that*, we know, he could not be, by any fresh experience of human waywardness and caprice), but much disturbed and much vexed by the unexpected nature of Darrell's communication. Schemes for Darrell's future had become plans of his own. Talk with his old school-fellow had, within the last three months, entered into the pleasures of his age. Darrell's abrupt and final renunciation of this social world made at once a void in the business of Alban's mind, and in the affections of Alban's heart. And no adequate reason assigned for so sudden a flight and so morbid a resolve! Some tormenting remembrance—some rankling grief—distinct from those of which Alban was cognizant, those in which he had been consulted, was implied but by vague and general hints. But what was the remembrance of the grief, Alban Morley, who knew every thing, was quite persuaded that Darrell would never suffer him to know. Could it be in any way connected with those three young ladies to whom Darrell's attentions had been so perversely impartial? The Colonel did not fail to observe that to those young ladies Darrell's letter did not even allude. Was it not possible that he had really felt for one of them a deeper sentiment than a man advanced in years ever likes to own even to his nearest friend—hazarded a proposal, and met with a rebuff? If so, Alban conjectured the female culprit by whom the sentiment had been inspired and the rebuff administered. "That mischievous kitten, Flora Vyvyan," growled the Colonel. "I always felt that she had the claws of a tigress under that *patte de velours!*" Roused by this suspicion, he sallied forth to call on the Vyvyans. Mr. Vyvyan, a widower, one of those quiet gentlemanlike men who sit much in the drawing-room and like receiving morning visitors, was at home to him. "So Darrell has left town for the season," said the Colonel, pushing straight to the point.

"Yes," said Mr. Vyvyan. "I had a note from him this morning, to say he had renounced all hope of—"

"What?" cried the Colonel.

"Joining us in Switzerland. I am so sorry. Flora still more sorry. She is accustomed to have her own way, and she had set her heart on hearing Darrell read 'Manfred' in sight of the Jung Frau!"

"Um," said the Colonel. "What might be sport to her might be death to him. A man at his age is not too old to fall in love with a young lady of hers. But he is too old not to be extremely ridiculous to *such* a young lady if he does."

"Colonel Morley — Fie!" cried an angry voice behind him. Flora had entered the room unobserved. Her face was much flushed, and her eyelids looked as if tears had lately swelled beneath them, and were swelling still.

"What have I said to merit your rebuke?" asked the Colonel, composedly.

"Said! Coupled the thought of ridicule with the name of Mr. Darrell!"

"Take care, Morley," said Mr. Vyvyan, laughing. "Flora is positively superstitious in

her respect for Guy Darrell; and you can not offend her more than by implying that he is mortal. Nay, child, it is very natural. Quite apart from his fame, there is something in that man's familiar talk, or rather, perhaps, in the very sound of his voice, which makes most other society seem flat and insipid. I feel it myself. And when Flora's young admirers flutter and babble round her—just after Darrell has quitted his chair beside her—they seem very poor company. I'm sure, Flora," continued Vyvyan, kindly, "that the mere acquaintance of such a man has done you a great deal of good; and I am now in great hopes that, whenever you marry, it will be a man of sense."

"Um!" again said the Colonel, eying Flora aslant, but with much attention. "How I wish, for my friend's sake, that he was of an age which inspired Miss Vyvyan with less—veneration!"

Flora turned her back on the Colonel, looking out of the window, and her small foot beating the ground with nervous irritation.

"It was given out that Darrell intended to marry again," said Mr. Vyvyan. "A man of that sort requires a very superior, highly-educated woman; and if Miss Carr Vipont had been a little more of his age she would have just suited him. But I am patriot enough to hope that he will remain single, and have no wife but his country, like Mr. Pitt."

The Colonel having now satisfied his curiosity, and assured himself that Darrell was, there at least, no rejected suitor, rose and approached Flora to make peace, and to take leave. As he held out his hand he was struck with the change in a countenance usually so gay in its aspect—it spoke of more than dejection, it betrayed distress; when she took his hand she retained it, and looked into his eyes wistfully; evidently there was something on her mind which she wished to express, and did not know how. At length she said in a whisper, "You are Mr. Darrell's most intimate friend; I have heard him say so. Shall you see him soon?"

"I fear not; but why?"

"Why? you, his friend; do you not perceive that he is not happy? I, a mere stranger, saw it at the first. You should cheer and comfort him; *you* have that right—it is a noble privilege."

"My dear young lady," said the Colonel, touched, "you have a better heart than I thought for. It is true Darrell is not a happy man; but can you give me any message that might cheer him more than an old bachelor's commonplace exhortations to take heart, forget the rains of yesterday, and hope for some gleam of sun on the morrow?"

"No," said Flora, sadly, "it would be a presumption indeed in me to affect the consoler's part; but—(her lips quivered)—but if I may judge by his letter, I may never see him again."

"His letter! He has written to *you*, then, as well as to your father?"

"Yes," said Flora, confused and coloring, "a few lines in answer to a silly note of mine; yes, tell him that I shall never forget his kind counsels, his delicate, indulgent construction of—of—in short, tell him my father is right, and that I shall be better and wiser all my life for the few short weeks in which I have known Guy Darrell."

"What secrets are you two whispering there?" asked Mr. Vyvyan from his easy chair.

"Ask her ten years hence," said the Colonel, as he retreated to the door. "The fairest leaves in the flower are the last that the bud will disclose."

From Mr. Vyvyan the Colonel went to Lord ——'s. His lordship had also heard from Darrell that morning; Darrell declined the invitation to —— Hall; business at Fawley. Lady Adela had borne the disappointment with her wonted serenity of temper, and had gone out shopping. Darrell had certainly not offered his hand in that quarter; had he done so—whether refused or accepted—all persons yet left in London would have heard the news. Thence the Colonel repaired to Carr Vipont's. Lady Selina was at home, and exceedingly cross. Carr had been astonished by a letter from Mr. Darrell, dated Fawley—left town for the season without even calling to take leave—a most eccentric man. She feared his head was a little touched—that he knew it, but did not like to own it—perhaps the doctors had told him he must keep quiet, and not excite himself with politics. "I had thought," said Lady Selina, "that he might have felt a growing attachment for Honoria; and, considering the disparity of years, and that Honoria certainly might marry any one, he was too proud to incur the risk of refusal. But I will tell you in confidence, as a relation and dear friend, that Honoria has a very superior mind, and might have overlooked the mere age: congenial tastes—you understand. But on thinking it all over, I begin to doubt whether *that* be the true reason for his running away in this wild sort of manner. My maid tells me that his house-steward called to say that the establishment was to be broken up. That looks as if he had resigned London for good; just, too, when, Carr says, the CRISIS, so long put off, is sure to burst on us. I'm quite sick of clever men—one never knows how to trust them; if they are not dishonest, they are eccentric! I have just been telling Honoria that clever men are, after all, the most tiresome husbands. Well, what makes you so silent? What do you say? Why don't you speak?"

"I am slowly recovering from my shock," said the Colonel. "So Darrell shirks THE CRISIS, and has not even hinted a preference for Honoria, the very girl in all London that would have made him a safe, rational companion. I told him so, and he never denied it. But it is a comfort to think he is no loss. Old monster!"

"Nay," said Lady Selina, mollified by so much sympathy, "I don't say he is no loss. Honestly speaking—between ourselves—I think he is a very great loss. An alliance between him and Honoria would have united all the Vipont influence. Lord Montfort has the greatest confidence in Darrell; and if this CRISIS comes, it is absolutely necessary for the Vipont interest that it should find somebody who can speak. Really, my dear Colonel Morley, you who have such an influence over this very odd man should exert it now. One must not be overnice in times of CRISIS; the country is at stake, Cousin Alban."

"I will do my best," said the Colonel; "I am quite aware that an alliance which would

secure Darrell's talents to the House of Vipont, and the House of Vipont to Darrell's talents, would—but 'tis no use talking, we must not sacrifice Honoria even on the altar of her country's interest!"

"Sacrifice! Nonsense! The man is not young, certainly; but then, what a grand creature—and so clever!"

"Clever—yes! But that was your very objection to him five minutes ago."

"I forgot the CRISIS. One don't want clever men every day, but there *are* days when one does want them!"

"I envy you that aphorism. But from what you now imply, I fear that Honoria may have allowed her thonghts to settle upon what may never take place; and, if so, she may fret."

"Fret! a daughter of mine fret!—and of all my daughters, Honoria! A girl of the best-disciplined mind! Fret! what a word—vulgar!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "So it is; I blush for it; but let us understand each other. If Darrell proposed for Honoria, you think, ambition apart, she would esteem him sufficiently for a decided preference."

LADY SELINA. "If that be his doubt, reassure him. He is shy; men of genius are; Honoria *would esteem* him! Till he has actually proposed, it would compromise her to say more even to you."

COLONEL MORLEY. "And if that be not the doubt, and if I ascertain that Darrell has no idea of proposing, Honoria would—"

LADY SELINA. "Despise him. Ah, I see by your countenance that you think I should prepare her. Is it so, frankly?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Frankly, then. I think Guy Darrell, like many other men, has been so long making up his mind to marry again that he has lost the right moment, and will never find it."

Lady Selina smells at her vinaigrette, and replies in her softest, affectedest, civilest, and crushingest manner—

"*Poor*—DEAR—OLD MAN!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Man is not permitted, with ultimate impunity, to exasperate the envies, and insult the miseries of those around him, by a systematic perseverance in willful—Celibacy. In vain may he scheme, in the marriage of injured friends, to provide arm-chairs, and foot-stools, and prattling babies for the luxurious delectation of his indolent age. The avenging Eumenides (being themselves ancient virgins neglected) shall humble his insolence, baffle his projects, and condemn his declining years to the horrors of solitude—rarely even wakening his soul to the grace of repentance.

THE Colonel, before returning home, dropped into the Clubs, and took care to give to Darrell's sudden disappearance a plausible and commonplace construction. The season was just over. Darrell had gone to the country. The town establishment was broken up, because the house in Carlton Gardens was to be sold. Darrell did not like the situation—found the air relaxing—Park Lane or Grosvenor Square were on higher ground. Besides, the stair-case was bad for a house of such pretensions—not suited to large parties. Next season Darrell might be in a position when he would have to give large parties, etc., etc. As no one is inclined to suppose that a man will retire from public life just when he has a chance of office, so the Clubs took Alban Morley's remarks unsuspiciously, and generally agreed that Darrell showed great tact in absenting himself from town during the transition state of politics that always precedes a CRISIS, and that it was quite clear that he calculated on playing a great part when the CRISIS was over, by finding his house had grown too small for him. Thus paving the way to Darrell's easy return to the world, should he repent of his retreat (a chance which Alban by no means dismissed from his reckoning), the Colonel returned home to find his nephew George awaiting him there. The scholarly clergyman had ensconced himself in the back drawing-room, fitted up as a library, and was making free with the books. "What have you there, George?" asked the Colonel, after shaking him by the hand. "You seemed quite absorbed in its contents, and would not have noticed my presence but for Gip's bark."

"A volume of poems I never chanced to meet before. Full of true genius."

"Bless me, poor Arthur Branthwaite's poems. And you were positively reading those—not induced to do so by respect for his father?—Could you make head or tail of them?"

"There is a class of poetry which displeases middle age by the very attributes which render it charming to the young; for each generation has a youth with idiosyncrasies peculiar to itself, and a peculiar poetry by which those idiosyncrasies are expressed."

Here George was beginning to grow metaphysical, and somewhat German, when his uncle's face assumed an expression which can only be compared to that of a man who dreads a very severe and long operation. George humanely hastened to relieve his mind.

"But I will not bore you at present."

"Thank you," said the Colonel, brightening up.

"Perhaps you will lend me the book. I am going down to Lady Montfort's by-and-by, and I can read it by the way."

"Yes, I will lend it to you till next season. Let me have it again then, to put on the table when Frank Vance comes to breakfast with me. The poet was his brother-in-law; and though, for that reason, poets and poetry are a sore subject with Frank, yet, the last time he breakfasted here, I felt, by the shake of his hand in parting, that he felt pleased by a mark of respect to all that is left of poor Arthur Branthwaite. So you are going to Lady Montfort? Ask her why she cuts me!"

"My dear uncle! You know how secluded her life is at present; but she has charged me to assure you of her unalterable regard for you; and whenever her health and spirits are somewhat more recovered, I have no doubt that she will ask you to give her the occasion to make that assurance in person."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Can her health and spirits continue so long affected by grief for the loss of that distant acquaintance whom the law called her husband?"

GEORGE. "She is very far from well, and her spirits are certainly much broken. And now, uncle, for the little favor I came to ask. Since

you presented me to Mr. Darrell, he kindly sent me two or three invitations to dinner, which my frequent absence from town would not allow me to accept. I ought to call on him; and, as I feel ashamed not to have done so before, I wish you would accompany me to his house. One happy word from you would save me a relapse into stutter. When I want to apologize, I always stutter."

"Darrell has left town," said the Colonel, roughly; "you have missed an opportunity that will never occur again. The most charming companion; an intellect so manly, yet so sweet! *I* shall never find such another." And for the first time in thirty years a tear stole to Alban Morley's eye.

GEORGE. "When did he leave town?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Three days ago."

GEORGE. "Three days ago! and for the Continent again?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "No, for the Hermitage. George, I have such a letter from him! You know how many years he has been absent from the world. When, this year, he reappeared, he and I grew more intimate than we had ever been since we had left school; for though the same capital held us before, he was then too occupied for much familiarity with an idle man like me. But just when I was intertwining what is left of my life with the bright threads of his, he snaps the web asunder; he quits this London world again; says he will return to it no more."

GEORGE. "Yet I did hear that he proposed to renew his parliamentary career; nay, that he was about to form a second marriage with Honoria Vipont!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Mere gossip—not true. No, he will never again marry. Three days ago I thought it certain that he would—certain that I should find for my old age a nook in his home—the easiest chair in his social circle; that my daily newspaper would have a fresh interest in the praise of his name or the report of his speech; that I should walk proudly into White's, sure to hear there of Guy Darrell; that I should keep from misanthropical rust my dry knowledge of life, planning shrewd panegyrics to him of a young, happy wife, needing all his indulgence—panegyrics to her of the high-minded, sensitive man, claiming tender respect and delicate soothing; that thus, day by day, I should have made more pleasant the home in which I should have planted myself, and found in his children boys to lecture and girls to spoil. Don't be jealous, George. I like your wife, I love your little ones, and you will have all I have to leave. But to an old bachelor, who would keep young to the last, there is no place so sunny as the hearth of an old school-friend. But my house of cards is blown down—talk of it no more—'tis a painful subject. You met Lionel Haughton here the last time you called—how did you like him?"

"Very much, indeed."

"Well, then, since you can not call on Darrell, call on him."

GEORGE (with animation). "It is just what I meant to do—what is his address?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "There is his card—take it. He was here last night to inquire if I knew where Darrell had gone, though no one in his household, nor I either, suspected till this morning that Darrell had left town for good. You will find Lionel at home, for I sent him word I would call. But really I am not up to it now. Tell him from me that Mr. Darrell will not return to Carlton Gardens this season, and is gone to Fawley. At present Lionel need not know more—you understand? And now, my dear George, good-day."

CHAPTER XX.

Each generation has its own critical canons in poetry as well as in political creeds, financial systems, or whatever other changeable matters of taste are called "Settled Questions" and "Fixed Opinions."

GEORGE, musing much over all that his uncle had said respecting Darrell, took his way to Lionel's lodgings. The young man received him with the cordial greeting due from Darrell's kinsman to Colonel Morley's nephew, but tempered by the respect no less due to the distinction and the calling of the eloquent preacher.

Lionel was perceptibly affected by learning that Darrell had thus suddenly returned to the gloomy beech-woods of Fawley; and he evinced his anxious interest in his benefactor with so much spontaneous tenderness of feeling, that George, as if in sympathy, warmed into the same theme. "I can well conceive," said he, "your affection for Mr. Darrell. I remember, when I was a boy, how powerfully he impressed me, though I saw but little of him. He was then in the zenith of his career, and had but few moments to give to a boy like me; but the ring of his voice and the flash of his eye sent me back to school, dreaming of fame, and intent on prizes. I spent part of one Easter vacation at his house in town; he bade his son, who was my school-fellow, invite me."

LIONEL. "You knew his son? How Mr. Darrell has felt that loss!"

GEORGE. "Heaven often vails its most provident mercy in what to man seems its sternest inflictions. That poor boy must have changed his whole nature, if his life had not to a father, like Mr. Darrell, occasioned grief sharper than his death."

LIONEL. "You amaze me. Mr. Darrell spoke of him as a boy of great promise."

GEORGE. "He had that kind of energy which to a father conveys the idea of promise, and which might deceive those older than himself—a fine bright-eyed bold-tongued boy, with just enough awe of his father to bridle his worst qualities before him."

LIONEL. "What were those?"

GEORGE. "Headstrong arrogance — relentless cruelty. He had a pride which would have shamed his father out of pride, had Guy Darrell detected its nature—purse pride! I remember his father said to me with a half-laugh, 'My boy must not be galled and mortified as I was every hour at school—clothes patched and pockets empty.' And so, out of mistaken kindness, Mr. Darrell ran into the opposite extreme, and the son was proud, not of his father's fame, but of his father's money, and withal not generous, nor exactly extravagant, but using money as power—power that allowed him to insult an equal or to buy a slave. In a word, his nickname at school was 'Sir Giles Overreach.' His

death was the result of his strange passion for tormenting others. He had a fag who could not swim, and who had the greatest terror of the water; and it was while driving this child into the river out of his depth that cramp seized himself, and he was drowned. Yes, when I think what that boy would have been as man, succeeding to Darrell's wealth—and had Darrell persevered (as he would, perhaps, if the boy had lived) in his public career—to the rank and titles he would probably have acquired and bequeathed—again I say, in man's affliction is often Heaven's mercy."

Lionel listened aghast. George continued, "Would that I could speak as plainly to Mr. Darrell himself! For we find constantly in the world that there is no error that misleads us like the error that is half a truth wrenched from the other half; and nowhere is such an error so common as when man applies it to the judgment of some event in his own life, and separates calamity from consolation."

LIONEL. "True; but who could have the heart to tell a mourning father that his dead son was worthless?"

GEORGE. "Alas, my young friend, the preacher must sometimes harden his own heart if he would strike home to another's soul. But I am not sure that Mr. Darrell would need so cruel a kindness. I believe that his clear intellect must have divined some portions of his son's nature which enabled him to bear the loss with fortitude. And he did bear it bravely. But now, Mr. Haughton, if you have the rest of the day free, I am about to make you an unceremonious proposition for its disposal. A lady who knew Mr. Darrell when she was very young, has a strong desire to form your acquaintance. She resides on the banks of the Thames, a little above Twickenham. I have promised to call on her this evening. Shall we dine together at Richmond? And afterward we can take a boat to her villa."

Lionel at once accepted, thinking so little of the lady that he did not even ask her name. He was pleased to have a companion with whom he could talk of Darrell. He asked but delay to write a few lines of affectionate inquiry to his kinsman at Fawley, and, while he wrote, George took out Arthur Branthwaite's poems and resumed their perusal. Lionel having sealed his letter, George extended the book to him. "Here are some remarkable poems by a brother-in-law of that remarkable artist, Frank Vance."

"Frank Vance! True, he had a brother-in-law a poet. I admire Frank so much; and, though he professes to sneer at poetry, he is so associated in my mind with poetical images that I am prepossessed beforehand in favor of all that brings him, despite himself, in connection with poetry."

"Tell me, then," said George, pointing out a passage in the volume, "what you think of these lines." My good uncle would call them gibberish. I am not sure that I can construe them; but when I was your age, I think I could —what say you?"

Lionel glanced. "Exquisite indeed! nothing can be clearer; they express exactly a sentiment in myself that I could never explain."

"Just so," said George, laughing. "Youth has a sentiment that it can not explain, and the sentiment is expressed in a form of poetry that middle age can not construe. It is true that poetry of the grand order interests equally all ages; but the world ever throws out a poetry not of the grandest; not meant to be durable—not meant to be universal—but following the shifts and changes of human sentiment, and just like those pretty sun-dials formed by flowers which bloom to tell the hour, open their buds to tell it, and, telling it, fade themselves from time."

Not listening to the critic, Lionel continued to read the poems, exclaiming, "How exquisite! how true!"

CHAPTER XXI.

In Life, as in Art, the Beautiful moves in curves.

THEY have dined. George Morley takes the oars, and the boat cuts through the dance of waves flushed by the golden sunset. Beautiful river! which might furnish the English taleteller with legends wild as those culled on shores licked by Hydaspes, and sweet as those which Cephisus ever blended with the songs of nightingales and the breath of violets! But what true English poet ever names thee, O Father Thames! without a melodious tribute? And what child ever whiled away summer noons along thy grassy banks, nor hallowed thy remembrance among the fairy days of life?

Silently Lionel bent over the side of the gliding boat, his mind carried back to the same soft stream five years ago. How vast a space in his short existence those five years seemed to fill! And how far, how immeasurably far from the young man, rich in the attributes of wealth, armed with each weapon of distinction, seemed the hour when the boy had groaned aloud, "Fortune is so far, Fame so impossible!" Farther and farther yet than his present worldly station from his past, seemed the image that had first called forth in his breast the dreamy sentiment, which the sternest of us in after-life never utterly forget. Passions rage and vanish, and when all their storms are gone, yea, it may be, at the verge of the very grave, we look back and see like a star the female face, even though it be a child's, that first set us vaguely wondering at the charm in a human presence, at the void in a smile withdrawn! How many of us could recall a Beatrice through the gaps of ruined hope, seen, as by the Florentine, on the earth a guileless infant, in the heavens a spirit glorified! Yes—Laura was an affectation—Beatrice a reality!

George's voice broke somewhat distastefully on Lionel's reverie. "We near our destination, and you have not asked me even the name of the lady to whom you are to render homage. It is Lady Montfort, widow to the last Marquis. You have no doubt heard Mr. Darrell speak of her?"

"Never Mr. Darrell—Colonel Morley often. And in the world I have heard her cited as perhaps the handsomest, and certainly the haughtiest, woman in England."

"Never heard Mr. Darrell mention her! that is strange, indeed," said George Morley, catching at Lionel's first words, and unnoticing his

after comment. "She was much in his house as a child, shared in his daughter's education."

"Perhaps for that very reason he shuns her name. Never but once did I hear him allude to his daughter; nor can I wonder at that, if it be true, as I have been told by people who seem to know very little of the particulars, that, while yet scarcely out of the nursery, she fled from his house with some low adventurer—a Mr. Hammond—died abroad the first year of that unhappy marriage."

"Yes, that is the correct outline of the story; and as you guess, it explains why Mr. Darrell avoids mention of one whom he associates with his daughter's name, though, if you desire a theme dear to Lady Montfort, you can select none that more interests her grateful heart than praise of the man who saved her mother from penury, and secured to herself the accomplishments and instruction which have been her chief solace."

"Chief solace! Was she not happy with Lord Montfort? What sort of man was he?"

"I owe to Lord Montfort the living I hold, and I can remember the good qualities alone of a benefactor. If Lady Montfort was not happy with him, it is just to both to say that she never complained. But there is much in Lady Montfort's character which the Marquis apparently failed to appreciate; at all events, they had little in common, and what was called Lady Montfort's haughtiness was perhaps but the dignity with which a woman of grand nature checks the pity that would debase her—the admiration that would sully—guards her own beauty, and protects her husband's name. Here we are. Will you stay for a few minutes in the boat while I go to prepare Lady Montfort for your visit?"

George leaped ashore, and Lionel remained under the covert of mighty willows that dipped their leaves into the wave. Looking through the green interstices of the foliage, he saw at the far end of the lawn, on a curving bank by which the glittering tide shot oblique, a simple arbor—an arbor like that from which he had looked upon summer stars five years ago—not so densely covered with the honey-suckle; still the honey-suckle, recently trained there, was fast creeping up the sides; and through the trellis of the wood-work and the leaves of the flowering shrub he just caught a glimpse of some form within—the white robe of a female form in a slow gentle movement—tending, perhaps, the flowers that wreathed the arbor. Now it was still, now it stirred again; now it was suddenly lost to view. Had the inmate left the arbor? Was the inmate Lady Montfort? George Morley's step had not passed in that direction.

CHAPTER XXII.

A quiet scene—an unquiet heart.

Meanwhile, not far from the willow-bank which sheltered Lionel, but far enough to be out of her sight, and beyond her hearing, George Morley found Lady Montfort seated alone. It was a spot on which Milton might have placed the Lady in "Comus"—a circle of the smoothest sward, ringed every where (except at one opening which left the glassy river in full view) with thick bosks of dark evergreens, and shrubs of livelier verdure; oak and chestnut backing and overhanging all. Flowers, too, raised on rustic tiers and stages; a tiny fountain, shooting up from a basin starred with the water-lily; a rustic table, on which lay books and the implements of woman's graceful work; so that the place had the home-look of a chamber, and spoke that intense love of the out-door life which abounds in our old poets, from Chaucer down to the day when minstrels, polished into wits, took to Wills's Coffee-house, and the lark came no more to bid bards

"Good-morrow
From his watch-tower in the skies."

But long since, thank Heaven, we have again got back the English poetry which chimes to the babble of the waters and the riot of the birds; and just as that poetry is the freshest which the out-door life has the most nourished, so I believe that there is no surer sign of the rich vitality which finds its raciest joys in sources the most innocent, than the childlike taste for that same out-door life. Whether you take from fortune the palace or the cottage, add to your chambers a hall in the courts of Nature. Let the earth but give you room to stand on; well, look up. Is it nothing to have for your roof-tree—heaven?

Caroline Montfort (be her titles dropped) is changed since we last saw her. The beauty is not less in degree, but it has gained in one attribute, lost in another; it commands less, it touches more. Still in deep mourning, the sombre dress throws a paler shade over the cheek. The eyes, more sunken beneath the brow, appear larger, softer. There is that expression of fatigue which either accompanies impaired health or succeeds to mental struggle and disquietude. But the coldness or pride of mien which was peculiar to Caroline, as a wife, is gone—as if in widowhood it was no longer needed. A something like humility prevailed over the look and the bearing which had been so tranquilly majestic. As at the approach of her cousin she started from her seat, there was a nervous tremor in her eagerness; a rush of color to the cheeks; an anxious quivering of the lip; a flutter in the tones of the sweet, low voice. "Well, George."

"Mr. Darrell is not in London; he went to Fawley three days ago; at least he is there now. I have this from my uncle, to whom he wrote; and whom his departure has vexed and saddened."

"Three days ago! It must have been he, then! I was not deceived," murmured Caroline, and her eyes wandered round.

"There is no truth in the report you heard that he was to marry Honoria Vipont. My uncle thinks he will never marry again, and implies that he has resumed his solitary life at Fawley with a resolve to quit it no more."

Lady Montfort listened silently, bending her face over the fountain, and dropping amidst its playful spray the leaves of a rose which she had abstractedly plucked as George was speaking.

"I have, therefore, fulfilled your commission so far," renewed George Morley. "I have ascertained that Mr. Darrell is alive, and doubtless well; so that it could not have been his ghost that startled you amidst yonder thicket.

But I have done more: I have forestalled the wish you expressed to become acquainted with young Haughton; and your object in postponing the accomplishment of that wish while Mr. Darrell himself was in town having ceased with Mr. Darrell's departure, I have ventured to bring the young man with me. He is in the boat yonder. Will you receive him? Or—but, my dear cousin, are you not too unwell to-day? What is the matter? Oh, I can easily make an excuse for you to Haughton. I will run and do so."

"No, George, no. I am as well as usual. I will see Mr. Haughton. All that you have heard of him, and have told me, interests me so much in his favor; and besides—" She did not finish the sentence; but, led away by some other thought, asked, "Have you no news of our missing friend?"

"None as yet; but in a few days I shall renew my search. Now, then, I will go for Haughton."

"Do so; and, George, when you have presented him to me, will you kindly join that dear, anxious child yonder? She is in the new arbor, or near it—her favorite spot. You must sustain her spirits and give her hope. You can not guess how eagerly she looks forward to your visits, and how gratefully she relies on your exertions."

George shook his head half-despondently, and saying, briefly, "My exertions have established no claim to her gratitude as yet," went quickly back for Lionel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Something, on an old subject, which has never been said before.

Although Lionel was prepared to see a very handsome woman in Lady Montfort, the beauty of her countenance took him by surprise. No preparation by the eulogies of description can lessen the effect which the first sight of a beautiful object produces upon a mind to which refinement of idea gives an accurate and quick comprehension of beauty. Be it a work of art, a scene in nature, or, rarest of all, a human face divine, a beauty never before beheld strikes us with hidden pleasure, like a burst of light; and it is a pleasure that elevates. The imagination feels itself richer by a new idea of excellence; for not only is real beauty wholly original, having no prototype, but its immediate influence is spiritual. It may seem strange—I appeal to every observant artist if the assertion be not true—but the first sight of the most perfect order of female beauty, rather than courting, rebukes and strikes back every grosser instinct that would alloy admiration. There must be some meanness and blemish in the beauty which the sensualist no sooner beholds than he covets. In the higher incarnation of the abstract idea which runs through all our notions of moral good and celestial purity—even if the moment the eye sees the heart loves the image—the love has in it something of the reverence which it was said the charms of Virtue would produce could her form be made visible; nor could mere human love obtrude itself till the sweet awe of the first effect had been familiarized away. And I apprehend that it is this exalting or etherealizing attribute of beauty to which all poets, all writers who would poetize the realities of life, have unconsciously rendered homage, in the rank to which they elevate what, stripped of such attribute, would be but a gaudy idol of painted clay. If from the loftiest epic to the tritest novel a heroine is often little more than a name to which we are called upon to bow, as to a symbol representing beauty; and if we ourselves (be we ever so indifferent in our common life to fair faces) feel that in art, at least, imagination needs an image of the Beautiful—if, in a word, both poet and reader here would not be left excuseless, it is because in our inmost hearts there is a sentiment which links the ideal of beauty with the Supersensual. Wouldst thou, for instance, form some vague conception of the shape worn by a pure soul released? wouldst thou give to it the likeness of an ugly hag? or wouldst thou not ransack all thy remembrances, all thy conceptions of forms most beauteous, to clothe the holy image? Do so: now bring it thus robed with the richest graces before thy mind's eye. Well, seest thou now the excuse for poets in the rank they give to Beauty? Seest thou now how high from the realm of the senses soars the mysterious Archetype? Without the idea of beauty, couldst thou conceive a form in which to clothe a soul that has entered heaven?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Agreeable surprises are the perquisites of youth.

If the beauty of Lady Montfort's countenance took Lionel by surprise, still more might he wonder at the winning kindness of her address—a kindness of look, manner, voice, which seemed to welcome him not as a chance acquaintance but as a new-found relation. The first few sentences, in giving them a subject of common interest, introduced into their converse a sort of confiding household familiarity. For Lionel, ascribing Lady Montfort's gracious reception to her early recollections of his kinsman, began at once to speak of Guy Darrell; and in a little time they were walking over the turf, or through the winding alleys of the garden, linking talk to the same theme, she by question, he by answer—he, charmed to expatiate—she, pleased to listen—and liking each other more and more, as she recognized in all he said a bright young heart, overflowing with grateful and proud affection, and as he felt instinctively that he was with one who sympathized in his enthusiasm—one who had known the great man in his busy day, ere the rush of his career had paused, whose childhood had lent a smile to the great man's home before childhood and smile had left it.

As they thus conversed, Lionel now and then, in the turns of their walk, caught a glimpse of George Morley in the distance, walking also side by side with some young companion, and ever as he caught that glimpse a strange restless curiosity shot across his mind, and distracted it even from praise of Guy Darrell. Who could that be with George? Was it a relation of Lady Montfort's? The figure was not in mourning; its shape seemed slight and youthful—now it pass-

es by that acacia-tree—standing for a moment apart and distinct from George's shadow, but its own outline dim in the deepening twilight—now it has passed on, lost among the laurels.

Lionel and Lady Montfort now came before the windows of the house, which was not large for the rank of the owner, but commodious, with no pretense to architectural beauty—dark-red brick, a century and a half old—irregular; jutting forth here, receding there, so as to produce that depth of light and shadow which lends a certain picturesque charm even to the least ornate buildings—a charm to which the Gothic architecture owes half its beauty. Jessamine, roses, woodbine, ivy, trained up the angles and between the windows. Altogether the house had that air of HOME which had been wanting to the regal formality of Montfort Court. One of the windows, raised above the ground by a short winding stair, stood open. Lights had seemingly just been brought into the room within, and Lionel's eye was caught by the gleam.

Lady Montfort turned up the stair, and Lionel followed her into the apartment. A harp stood at one corner—not far from it the piano and music-stand. On one of the tables there were the implements of drawing—a sketch in water-colors half finished.

"Our work-room," said Lady Montfort, with a warm cheerful smile, and yet Lionel could see that tears were in her eyes—"mine and my dear pupil's. Yes, that harp is hers. Is he still fond of music—I mean Mr. Darrell?"

"Yes, though he does not care for it in crowds; but he can listen for hours to Fairthorn's lute. You remember Mr. Fairthorn?"

"Yes, I remember him," answered Lady Montfort, softly. "Mr. Darrell, then, likes *his* music still?"

Lionel here uttered an exclamation of more than surprise. He had turned to examine the water-color sketch—a rustic inn, a honey-suckle arbor, a river in front, a boat yonder—just begun.

"I know the spot!" he cried. "Did you make the sketch of it?"

"I? no; it is hers—my pupil's—my adopted child's."

Lionel's dark eyes turned to Lady Montfort's wistfully, inquiringly; they asked what his lips could not presume to ask. "Your adopted child—what is she?—who?"

As if answering to the eyes, Lady Montfort said—

"Wait here a moment; I will go for her."

She left him, descended the stairs into the garden, joined George Morley and his companion; took aside the former, whispered him, then drawing the arm of the latter within her own, led her back into the room, while George Morley remained in the garden, throwing himself on a bench, and gazing on the stars as they now came forth, fast and frequent, though one by one.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Quem Fors dierum cunque dabit
Lucro appone."—HORAT.

LIONEL stood, expectant, in the centre of the room, and as the two female forms entered the lights were full upon their faces. That younger face—it is she—it is she, the unforgotten—the long lost. Instinctively, as if no years had rolled between—as if she were still the little child, he the boy who had coveted such a sister—he sprang forward and opened his arms, and as suddenly halted, dropped the arms to his side, blushing, confused, abashed. She! that vagrant child!—she! that form so elegant—that great peeress's pupil—adopted daughter, *she!* the poor wandering Sophy! She!—impossible!

But her eyes, at first downcast, are now fixed on him. She, too, starts—not forward, but in recoil; she, too, raises her arms, not to open, but to press them to her breast; and she, too, as suddenly checks an impulse, and stands, like him, blushing, confused, abashed.

"Yes," said Caroline Montfort, drawing Sophy nearer to her breast—"yes, you will both forgive me for the surprise. Yes, you do see before you, grown up to become the pride of those who cherish her, that Sophy who—"

"Sophy!" cried Lionel, advancing; "it is so, then! I knew you were no stroller's grandchild."

Sophy drew up—"I am, I am *his* grandchild, and as proud to be so as I was then."

"Pardon me, pardon me; I meant to say that he too was not what he seemed. You forgive me," extending his hand, and Sophy's soft hand fell into his forgivingly.

"But he lives? is well? is here? is—" Sophy burst into tears, and Lady Montfort made a sign to Lionel to go into the garden and leave them. Reluctantly and dizzily, as one in a dream, he obeyed, leaving the vagrant's grandchild to be soothed in the fostering arms of her whom, an hour or two ago, he knew but by the titles of her rank and the reputation of her pride.

It was not many minutes before Lady Montfort rejoined him.

"You touched unawares," said she, "upon the poor child's most anxious cause of sorrow. Her grandfather, for whom her affection is so sensitively keen, has disappeared. I will speak of that later; and if you wish, you shall be taken into our consultations. But—" she paused, looked into his face—open, loyal face, face of gentleman—with heart of man in its eyes, soul of man on its brow;—face formed to look up to the stars which now lighted it—and laying her hand lightly on his shoulder, resumed with hesitating voice—"But I feel like a culprit in asking you what, nevertheless, I must ask, as an imperative condition, if your visits here are to be renewed—if your intimacy here is to be established. And unless you comply with that condition, come no more; we can not confide in each other."

"Oh, Lady Montfort, impose any condition. I promise beforehand."

"Not beforehand. The condition is this: inviolable secrecy. You will not mention to any one your visits here; your introduction to me; your discovery of the stroller's grandchild in my adopted daughter."

"Not to Mr. Darrell?"

"To him least of all; but this I add, it is for Mr. Darrell's sake that I insist on such concealment; and I trust the concealment will not be long protracted."

"For Mr. Darrell's sake!"

"For the sake of his happiness," cried Lady Montfort, clasping her hands. "My debt to him is larger far than yours; and in thus appealing to you, I scheme to pay back a part of it. Do you trust me?"

"I do, I do."

And from that evening Lionel Haughton became the constant visitor in that house.

Two or three days afterward Colonel Morley, quitting England for a German Spa at which he annually recruited himself for a few weeks, relieved Lionel from the embarrassment of any questions which that shrewd observer might otherwise have addressed to him. London itself was now empty. Lionel found a quiet lodging in the vicinity of Twickenham. And when his foot passed along the shady lane through yon wicket gate into that region of turf and flowers, he felt as might have felt that famous Minstrel of Ercildoun, when, blessed with the privilege to enter Fairyland at will, the Rhymer stole to the grassy hill-side, and murmured the spell that unlocks the gates of Oberon.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

"A little fire burns up a great deal of corn."
OLD PROVERB.

GUY DARRELL resumed the thread of solitary life at Fawley with a calm which was deeper in its gloom than it had been before. The experiment of return to the social world had failed. The resolutions which had induced the experiment were finally renounced. Five years nearer to death, and the last hope that had flitted across the narrowing desponding passage to the grave, fallen like a faithless torch from his own hand, and trodden out by his own foot.

It was peculiarly in the nature of Darrell to connect his objects with posterity—to regard eminence in the Present but as a beacon-height from which to pass on to the Future the name he had taken from the Past. All his early ambition, sacrificing pleasure to toil, had placed its goal at a distance, remote from the huzzas of by-standers; and Ambition halted now, baffled and despairing. Childless, his line would perish with himself—himself, who had so vaunted its restoration in the land! His genius was childless also—it would leave behind it no offspring of the brain. By toil he had amassed ample wealth; by talent he had achieved a splendid reputation. But the reputation was as perishable as the wealth. Let a half century pass over his tomb, and nothing would be left to speak of the successful lawyer, the applauded orator, save traditional anecdotes, a laudatory notice in contemporaneous memoirs—perhaps, at most, quotations of eloquent sentences lavished on forgotten cases and obsolete debates—shreds and fragments of a great intellect, which another half-century would sink without a bubble into the depths of Time.* He had enacted no laws—he had administered no state—he had composed no books. Like the figure on a clock, which adorns the case and has no connection with the movement, he, so prominent an ornament to Time, had no part in its works. Removed, the eye would miss him for a while; but a nation's literature or history was the same, whether with him or without. Some with a tithe of his abilities have the luck to fasten their names to things that endure; they have been responsible for measures they did not invent, and which, for good or evil, influence long generations. They have written volumes out of which a couplet of verse, a period in prose, may cling to the rock of ages as a shell that survives a deluge. But the orator, whose effects are immediate—who enthralls his audience in proportion as he nicks the hour—who, were he speaking like Burke what, apart from the subject-matter, closet students would praise, must, like Burke, thin his audience, and exchange present oratorical success for ultimate intellectual renown—a man, in short, whose oratory is emphatically that of the DEBATER, is, like an actor, rewarded with a loud applause and a complete oblivion. Waife on the village stage might win applause no less loud, followed by oblivion not more complete.

Darrell was not blind to the brevity of his fame. In his previous seclusion he had been resigned to that conviction—now it saddened him. Then, unconfessed by himself, the idea that he might yet reappear in active life, and do something which the world would not willingly let die, had softened the face of that tranquil Nature from which he must soon now pass out of reach and sight. On the tree of Time he was a leaf already sere upon the bough—not an inscription graven into the rind.

Ever slow to yield to weak regrets—ever seeking to combat his own enemies within—Darrell said to himself one night, while Fairthorn's flute was breathing an air of romance through the melancholy walls, "Is it too late yet to employ this still busy brain upon works that will live when I am dust, and make Posterity supply the heir that fails to my house?"

He shut himself up with immortal authors—he meditated on the choice of a theme; his knowledge was wide, his taste refined;—words!—*he* could not want words! Why should he not write? Alas! why indeed?—He who has never been a writer in his youth, can no more be a writer in his age than he can be a painter

* It is so with many a Pollio of the Bar and Senate. Fifty years hence, and how faint upon the page of Hansard will be the vestiges of Follett! No printer's type can record his decorous grace—the persuasion of his silvery tongue. Fifty years hence, even Plunkett, weightiest speaker, on his own subject, in the assembly that contained a Canning and a Brougham, will be a myth to our grandsons.

—a musician. What! not write a book? Oh yes—as he may paint a picture or set a song. But a writer, in the emphatic sense of the word —a writer as Darrell was an orator—Oh no! And, least of all, will he be a writer if he has been an orator by impulse and habit—an orator too happily gifted to require, and too laboriously occupied to resort to, the tedious aids of written preparation—an orator as modern life forms orators—not, of course, an orator like those of the classic world, who elaborated sentences before delivery, and who, after delivery, polished each extemporaneous interlude into rhetorical exactitude and musical perfection. And how narrow the range of compositions to a man burdened already by a grave reputation! He can not have the self-abandonment—he can not venture the headlong charge — with which Youth flings the reins to genius, and dashes into the ranks of Fame. Few and austere his themes—fastidious and hesitating his taste. Restricted are the movements of him who walks for the first time into the Forum of Letters with the purple hem on his senatorial toga. Guy Darrell, at his age, entering among authors as a novice!—he, the great lawyer, to whom attorneys would have sent no briefs had he been suspected of coquetting with a muse—he, the great orator, who had electrified audiences in proportion to the sudden effects which distinguish oral inspiration from written eloquence—he achieve now, in an art which his whole life had neglected, any success commensurate to his contemporaneous repute; — how unlikely! But a success which should outlive that repute, win the "everlasting inheritance" which could alone have nerved him to adequate effort—how impossible! He could not himself comprehend why, never at a loss for language felicitously apposite or richly ornate when it had but to flow from his thought to his tongue, nor wanting ease, even eloquence, in epistolary correspondence confidentially familiar — he should find words fail ideas, and ideas fail words, the moment his pen became a wand that conjured up the Ghost of the dread Public! The more copious his thoughts, the more embarrassing their selection; the more exquisite his perception of excellence in others, the more timidly frigid his efforts at faultless style. It would be the same with the most skillful author, if the Ghost of the Public had not long since ceased to haunt him. While he writes, the true author's solitude is absolute or peopled at his will. But take an audience from an orator, what is he? He commands the living Public—the Ghost of the Public awes himself.

"Surely once," sighed Darrell, as he gave his blurred pages to the flames—"surely once I had some pittance of the author's talent, and have spent it upon lawsuits."

The author's talent, no doubt, Guy Darrell once had — the author's temperament, never. What is the author's temperament? Too long a task to define. But without it a man may write a clever book, a useful book, a book that may live a year, ten years, fifty years. He will not stand out to distant ages a representative of the age that rather lived in him than he in it. The author's temperament is that which makes him an integral, earnest, original unity, distinct from all before and all that may succeed him. And as a Father of the Church has said that the consciousness of individual being is the sign of immortality, not granted to the inferior creatures—so it is in this individual temperament one and indivisible; and in the intense conviction of it, more than in all the works it may throw off, that the author becomes immortal. Nay, his works may perish like those of Orpheus or Pythagoras;* but he himself, in his name, in the footprint of his being, remains, like Orpheus or Pythagoras, undestroyed, indestructible.

Resigning literature, the Solitary returned to science. There he was more at home. He had cultivated science, in his dazzling academical career, with ardor and success; he had renewed the study, on his first retirement to Fawley, as a distraction from tormenting memories or unextinguished passions. He now for the first time regarded the absorbing abstruse occupation as a possible source of fame. To be one in the starry procession of those sons of light who have solved a new law in the statute-book of heaven! Surely a grand ambition, not unbecoming to his years and station, and pleasant in its labors to a man who loved Nature's outward scenery with poetic passion, and had studied her inward mysteries with a sage's minute research. Science needs not the author's art—she rejects its graces —she recoils with a shudder from its fancies. But Science requires in the mind of the discoverer a limpid calm. The lightnings that reveal Diespiter must flash in serene skies. No clouds store that thunder—

> "Quo bruta tellus, et vaga flumina,
> Quo Styx, et invisi horrida Tænari
> Sedes, Atlanteusque finis
> Concutitur!"

So long as you take science only as a distraction, science will not lead you to discovery. And from some cause or other, Guy Darrell was more unquiet and perturbed in his present than in his past seclusion. Science this time failed even to distract. In the midst of august meditations—of close experiment — some haunting angry thought from the far world passed with rude shadow between Intellect and Truth—the heart eclipsed the mind. The fact is, that Darrell's genius was essentially formed for Action. His was the true orator's temperament, with the qualities that belong to it—the grasp of affairs —the comprehension of men and states — the constructive, administrative faculties. In such career, and in such career alone, could he have developed all his powers, and achieved an imperishable name. Gradually as science lost its interest, he retreated from all his former occupations, and would wander for long hours over the wild unpopulated landscapes round him. As if it were his object to fatigue the body, and in that fatigue tire out the restless brain, he would make his gun the excuse for rambles from sunrise to twilight over the manors he had purchased years ago, lying many miles off from Fawley. There are times when a man who has passed his life in cultivating his mind finds that the more he can make the physical existence predominate, the more he can lower himself to the rude vigor of his game-keeper or his day-

* It need scarcely be said that the works ascribed to Orpheus or Pythagoras are generally allowed not to be genuine.

laborer — why, the more he can harden his nerves to support the weight of his reflections.

In these rambles he was not always alone. Fairthorn contrived to insinuate himself much more than formerly into his master's habitual companionship. The faithful fellow had missed Darrell so sorely in that long unbroken absence of five years, that on recovering him, Fairthorn seemed resolved to make up for lost time. Departing from his own habits, he would, therefore, lie in wait for Guy Darrell—creeping out of a bramble or bush, like a familiar sprite; and was no longer to be awed away by a curt syllable or a contracted brow. And Darrell, at first submitting reluctantly, and out of compassionate kindness, to the flute-player's obtrusive society, became by degrees to welcome and relax in it. Fairthorn knew the great secrets of his life. To Fairthorn alone on all earth could he speak without reserve of one name and of one sorrow. Speaking to Fairthorn was like talking to himself, or to his pointers, or to his favorite doe, upon which last he bestowed a new collar, with an inscription that implied more of the true cause that had driven him a second time to the shades of Fawley than he would have let out to Alban Morley or even to Lionel Haughton. Alban was too old for that confidence—Lionel much too young. But the Musician, like Art itself, was of no age; and if ever the gloomy master unbent his outward moodiness and secret spleen in any approach to gayety, it was in a sort of saturnine playfulness to this grotesque, grown-up infant. They cheered each other, and they teased each other. Stalking side by side over the ridged fallows, Darrell would sometimes pour forth his whole soul, as a poet does to his muse; and at Fairthorn's abrupt interruption or rejoinder, turn round on him with fierce objurgation or withering sarcasm, or what the flute-player abhorred more than all else, a truculent quotation from Horace, which drove Fairthorn away into some vanishing covert or hollow, out of which Darrell had to entice him, sure that, in return, Fairthorn would take a sly occasion to send into his side a vindictive prickle. But as the two came home in the starlight, the dogs dead beat and poor Fairthorn too—ten to one but what the musician was leaning all his weight on his master's nervous arm, and Darrell was looking with tender kindness in the face of the SOME ONE left to lean upon him still.

One evening, as they were sitting together in the library, the two hermits, each in his corner, and after a long silence, the flute-player said abruptly—

"I have been thinking—"

"Thinking!" quoth Darrell, with his mechanical irony; "I am sorry for you. Try not to do so again."

FAIRTHORN. "Your poor dear father—"

Darrell, wincing, startled, and expectant of a prickle—"Eh? my father—"

FAIRTHORN. "Was a great antiquary. How it would have pleased him could he have left a fine collection of antiquities as an heir-loom to the nation!—his name thus preserved for ages, and connected with the studies of his life. There are the Elgin Marbles. The parson was talking to me yesterday of a new Vernon Gallery; why not in the British Museum an everlasting Darrell Room? Plenty to stock it mouldering yonder in the chambers which you will never finish."

"My dear Dick," cried Darrell, starting up, "give me your hand. What a brilliant thought! I could do nothing else to preserve my dear father's name. *Eureka!* You are right. Set the carpenters at work to-morrow. Remove the boards; open the chambers; we will inspect their stores, and select what would worthily furnish 'A Darrell Room.' Perish Guy Darrell the lawyer! Philip Darrell the antiquary at least shall live!"

It is marvelous with what charm Fairthorn's lucky idea seized upon Darrell's mind. The whole of the next day he spent in the forlorn skeleton of the unfinished mansion slowly decaying beside his small and homely dwelling. The pictures, many of which were the rarest originals in early Flemish and Italian art, were dusted with tender care, and hung from hasty nails upon the bare ghastly walls. Delicate ivory carvings, wrought by the matchless hand of Cellini—early Florentine bronzes—priceless specimens of Raffaelle ware and Venetian glass—the precious trifles, in short, which the collector of medieval curiosities amasses for his heirs to disperse among the palaces of kings and the cabinets of nations — were dragged again to unfamiliar light. The invaded sepulchral building seemed a very Pompeii of the *Cinque Cento*. To examine, arrange, methodize, select for national purposes, such miscellaneous treasures, would be the work of weeks. For easier access, Darrell caused a slight hasty passage to be thrown over the gap between the two edifices. It ran from the room niched into the gables of the old house, which, originally fitted up for scientific studies, now became his habitual apartment, into the largest of the uncompleted chambers which had been designed for the grand reception-gallery of the new building. Into the pompous gallery thus made contiguous to his monk-like cell, he gradually gathered the choicest specimens of his collection. The damps were expelled by fires on grateless hearth-stones; sunshine admitted from windows now for the first time exchanging boards for glass; rough iron sconces, made at the nearest forge, were thrust into the walls, and sometimes lighted at night—Darrell and Fairthorn walking arm in arm along the unpolished floors, in company with Holbein's Nobles, Perugino's Virgins. Some of that high-bred company displaced and banished the next day, as repeated inspection made the taste more rigidly exclusive. Darrell had found object, amusement, occupation—frivolous if compared with those lenses, and glasses, and algebraical scrawls which had once whiled lonely hours in the attic-room hard by; but not frivolous even to the judgment of the austerest sage, if that sage had not reasoned away his heart. For here it was not Darrell's taste that was delighted; it was Darrell's heart that, ever hungry, had found food. His heart was connecting those long-neglected memorials of an ambition baffled and relinquished—here with a nation, there with his father's grave! How his eyes sparkled! how his lip smiled! Nobody would have guessed it—none of us know each other; least of all do we know the interior being of those whom we estimate by

public repute; but what a world of simple, fond affection, lay coiled and wasted in that proud man's solitary breast!

CHAPTER II.

The learned compute that seven hundred and seven millions of millions of vibrations have penetrated the eye before the eye can distinguish the tints of a violet. What philosophy can calculate the vibrations of the heart before it can distinguish the colors of love?

While Guy Darrell thus passed his hours within the unfinished fragments of a dwelling builded for posterity, and among the still relics of remote generations, Love and Youth were weaving their warm eternal idyll on the sunny lawns by the gliding river.

There they are, Love and Youth, Lionel and Sophy, in the arbor round which her slight hands have twined the honey-suckle, fond imitation of that bower endeared by the memory of her earliest holiday—she seated coyly, he on the ground at her feet, as when Titania had watched his sleep. He has been reading to her, the book has fallen from his hand. What book? That volume of poems so unintelligibly obscure to all but the dreaming young, who are so unintelligibly obscure to themselves. But to the merit of those poems, I doubt if even George did justice. It is not true, I believe, that they are not durable. Some day or other, when all the jargon so feelingly denounced by Colonel Morley, about "æsthetics," and "objective," and "subjective," has gone to its long home, some critic who can write English will probably bring that poor little volume fairly before the public; and, with all its manifold faults, it will take a place in the affections, not of one single generation of the young, but—everlasting, ever-dreaming, ever-growing youth. But you and I, reader, have no other interest in these poems, except this — that they were written by the brother-in-law of that whimsical, miserly Frank Vance, who perhaps, but for such a brother-in-law, would never have gone through the labor by which he has cultivated the genius that achieved his fame; and if he had not cultivated that genius, he might never have known Lionel; and if he had never known Lionel, Lionel might never perhaps have gone to the Surrey village, in which he saw the Phenomenon: And to push farther still that Voltaireian philosophy of ifs—if either Lionel or Frank Vance had not been so intimately associated in the minds of Sophy and Lionel with the golden holiday on the beautiful river, Sophy and Lionel might not have thought so much of those poems; and if they had not thought so much of those poems, there might not have been between them that link of poetry without which the love of two young people is a sentiment, always very pretty, it is true, but much too commonplace to deserve special commemoration in a work so uncommonly long as this is likely to be. And thus it is clear that Frank Vance is not a superfluous and episodical personage among the characters of this history; but, however indirectly, still essentially, one of those beings without whom the author must have given a very different answer to the question, "What will he do with it?"

Return we to Lionel and Sophy. The poems have brought their hearts nearer and nearer together. And when the book fell from Lionel's hand, Sophy knew that his eyes were on her face, and her own eyes looked away. And the silence was so deep and so sweet! Neither had yet said to the other a word of love. And in that silence both felt that they loved and were beloved. Sophy! how childlike she looked still! How little she is changed!—except that the soft blue eyes are far more pensive, and that her merry laugh is now never heard. In that luxurious home, fostered with the tenderest care by its charming owner, the romance of her childhood realized, and Lionel by her side, she misses the old crippled vagrant. And therefore it is that her merry laugh is no longer heard! "Ah!" said Lionel, softly breaking the pause at length, "Do not turn your eyes from me, or I shall think that there are tears in them!" Sophy's breast heaved, but her eyes were averted still. Lionel rose gently, and came to the other side of her quiet form. "Fie! there *are* tears, and you would hide them from me. Ungrateful!"

Sophy looked at him now with candid, inexpressible, guileless affection in those swimming eyes, and said, with touching sweetness, "Ungrateful! Should I not be so if I were gay and happy?"

And in self-reproach for not being sufficiently unhappy while that young consoler was by her side, she too rose, left the arbor, and looked wistfully along the river. George Morley was expected; he might bring tidings of the absent. And now while Lionel, rejoining her, exerts all his eloquence to allay her anxiety and encourage her hopes, and while they thus, in that divinest stage of love, ere the tongue repeats what the eyes have told, glide along—here in sunlight by lingering flowers—there in shadow under mournful willows, whose leaves are ever the latest to fall, let us explain by what links of circumstance Sophy became the great lady's guest, and Waife once more a homeless wanderer.

CHAPTER III.

Comprising many needful explanations illustrative of wise saws; as, for example, "He that bath an ill name is half hanged." "He that hath been bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope." "He that looks for a star puts out his candles;" and, "When God wills, all winds bring rain."

The reader has been already made aware how, by an impulse of womanhood and humanity, Arabella Crane had been converted from a persecuting into a tutelary agent in the destinies of Waife and Sophy. That revolution in her moral being dated from the evening on which she had sought the cripple's retreat to warn him of Jasper's designs. We have seen by what stratagem she had made it appear that Waife and his grandchild had sailed beyond the reach of molestation; with what liberality she had advanced the money that freed Sophy from the manager's claim; and how considerately she had empowered her agent to give the reference which secured to Waife the asylum in which we last beheld him. In a few stern sentences she had acquainted Waife with her

fearless, inflexible resolve to associate her fate henceforth with the life of his lawless son; and, by rendering abortive all his evil projects of plunder, to compel him at last to depend upon her for an existence neither unsafe nor sordid, provided only that it were not dishonest. The moment that she revealed that design, Waife's trust in her was won. His own heart enabled him to comprehend the effect produced upon a character otherwise unamiable and rugged, by the grandeur of self-immolation and the absorption of one devoted heroic thought. In the strength and bitterness of passion which thus pledged her existence to redeem another's, he obtained the key to her vehement and jealous nature; saw why she had been so cruel to the child of a rival; why she had conceived compassion for that child in proportion as the father's unnatural indifference had quenched the anger of her own self-love; and, above all, why, as the idea of reclaiming and appropriating solely to herself the man who, for good or for evil, had grown into the all-predominant object of her life, gained more and more the mastery over her mind, it expelled the lesser and the baser passions, and the old mean revenge against an infant faded away before the light of that awakening conscience, which is often rekindled from ashes by the sparks of a single better and worthier thought. And, in the resolute design to reclaim Jasper Losely, Arabella came at once to a ground in common with his father, with his child. Oh what, too, would the old man owe to her, what would be his gratitude, his joy, if she not only guarded his spotless Sophy, but saved from the bottomless abyss his guilty son! Thus when Arabella Crane had, nearly five years before, sought Waife's discovered hiding-place, near the old blood-stained tower, mutual interests and sympathies had formed between them a bond of alliance not the less strong because rather tacitly acknowledged and openly expressed. Arabella had written to Waife from the Continent, for the first half year, pretty often, and somewhat sanguinely, as to the chance of Losely's ultimate reformation. Then the intervals of silence became gradually more prolonged, and the letters more brief. But still, whether from the wish not unnecessarily to pain the old man, or, as would be more natural to her character, which, even in its best aspects, was not gentle, from a proud dislike to confess failure, she said nothing of the evil courses which Jasper had renewed. Evidently she was always near him. Evidently, by some means or another, his life, furtive and dark, was ever under the glare of her watchful eyes.

Meanwhile, Sophy had been presented to Caroline Montfort. As Waife had so fondly anticipated, the lone childless lady had taken with kindness and interest to the fair motherless child. Left to herself often for months together in the grand forlorn house, Caroline soon found an object to her pensive walks in the basket-maker's cottage. Sophy's charming face and charming ways stole more and more into affections which were denied all nourishment at home. She entered into Waife's desire to improve, by education, so exquisite a nature; and, familiarity growing by degrees, Sophy was at length coaxed up to the great house; and during the hours which Waife devoted to his rambles (for even in his settled industry he could not conquer his vagrant tastes, but would weave his reeds or osiers as he sauntered through solitudes of turf or wood), became the docile, delighted pupil in the simple chintz room which Lady Montfort had reclaimed from the desert of her surrounding palace. Lady Montfort was not of a curious turn of mind; profoundly indifferent even to the gossip of drawing-rooms, she had no rankling desire to know the secrets of village hearth-stones. Little acquainted even with the great world—scarcely at all with any world below that in which she had her being, save as she approached humble sorrows by delicate charity—the contrast between Waife's calling and his conversation roused in her no vigilant suspicions. A man of some education, and born in a rank that touched upon the order of gentlemen, but of no practical or professional culture — with whimsical tastes — with roving, eccentric habits — had, in the course of life, picked up much harmless wisdom, but, perhaps from want of worldly prudence, failed of fortune. Contented with an obscure retreat and an humble livelihood, he might yet naturally be loth to confide to others the painful history of a descent in life. He might have relations in a higher sphere, whom the confession would shame; he might be silent in the manly pride which shrinks from alms and pity and a tale of fall. Nay, grant the worst—grant that Waife had suffered in repute as well as fortune—grant that his character had been tarnished by some plausible circumstantial evidences which he could not explain away to the satisfaction of friends or the acquittal of a short-sighted world —had there not been, were there not always, many innocent men similarly afflicted? And who could hear Waife talk, or look on his arch smile, and not feel that he was innocent? So, at least, thought Caroline Montfort. Naturally; for if in her essentially womanlike character there was one all-pervading and all-predominant attribute, it was Pity. If Fate had placed her under circumstances fitted to ripen into genial development all her exquisite forces of soul, her true post in this life would have been that of the Soother. What a child to some grief-worn father! What a wife to some toiling, aspiring, sensitive man of genius! What a mother to some suffering child! It seemed as if it were necessary to her to have something to compassionate and foster. She was sad when there was no one to comfort; but her smile was like a sunbeam from Eden when it chanced on a sorrow it could brighten away. Out of this very sympathy came her faults—faults of reasoning and judgment. Prudent in her own chilling path through what the world calls temptations, because so ineffably pure — because, to Fashion's light tempters, her very thought was as closed, as

> "Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,"

was the ear of Sabrina to the comrades of Comus—yet place before her some gentle scheme that seemed fraught with a blessing for others, and straightway her fancy embraced it, prudence faded—she saw not the obstacles, weighed not the chances against it. Charity to her did not come alone, but with its sister twins, Hope and Faith.

Thus, benignly for the old man and the fair

child, years rolled on till Lord Montfort's sudden death, and his widow was called upon to exchange Montfort Court (which passed to the new heir) for the distant jointure house of Twickenham. By this time she had grown so attached to Sophy, and Sophy so gratefully fond of her, that she proposed to Waife to take his sweet grandchild as her permanent companion, complete her education, and assure her future. This had been the old man's cherished day-dream; but he had not contemplated its realization until he himself were in the grave. He turned pale, he staggered, when the proposal which would separate him from his grandchild was first brought before him. But he recovered ere Lady Montfort could be aware of the acuteness of the pang she inflicted, and accepted the generous offer with warm protestations of joy and gratitude. But Sophy! Sophy consent to leave her grandfather afar and aged in his solitary cottage! Little did either of them know Sophy, with her soft heart and determined soul, if they supposed such egotism possible in her. Waife insisted—Waife was angry—Waife was authoritative—Waife was imploring—Waife was pathetic—all in vain! But to close every argument, the girl went boldly to Lady Montfort, and said, "If I left him, his heart would break—never ask it." Lady Montfort kissed Sophy tenderly as mother ever kissed a child for some sweet loving trait of a noble nature, and said simply, "But he shall not be left—he shall come too."

She offered Waife rooms in her Twickenham house—she wished to collect books—he should be librarian. The old man shivered and refused—refused firmly. He had made a vow not to be a guest in any house. Finally, the matter was compromised; Waife would remove to the neighborhood of Twickenham; there hire a cottage; there ply his art; and Sophy, living with him, should spend a part of each day with Lady Montfort as now.

So it was resolved. Waife consented to occupy a small house on the verge of the grounds belonging to the jointure villa, on the condition of paying rent for it. And George Morley insisted on the privilege of preparing that house for his old teacher's reception, leaving it simple and rustic to outward appearance, but fitting its pleasant chambers with all that his knowledge of the old man's tastes and habits suggested for comfort or humble luxury; a room for Sophy, hung with the prettiest paper, all butterflies and flowers, commanding a view of the river. Waife, despite his proud scruples, could not refuse such gifts from a man whose fortune and career had been secured by his artful lessons. Indeed, he had already permitted George to assist, though not largely, his own efforts to repay the £100 advanced by Mrs. Crane. The years he had devoted to a craft which his ingenuity made lucrative, had just enabled the basket-maker, with his pupil's aid, to clear off that debt by installments. He had the satisfaction of thinking that it was his industry which had replaced the sum to which his grandchild owed her release from the execrable Rugge.

Lady Montfort's departure (which preceded Waife's by some weeks) was more mourned by the poor in her immediate neighborhood than by the wealthier families who composed what a province calls its society, and the gloom which that event cast over the little village round the kingly mansion was increased when Waife and his grandchild left.

For the last three years, emboldened by Lady Montfort's protection, and the conviction that he was no longer pursued or spied, the old man had relaxed his earlier reserved and secluded habits. Constitutionally sociable, he had made acquaintance with his humbler neighbors; lounged by their cottage palings in his rambles down the lanes; diverted their children with Sir Isaac's tricks, or regaled them with nuts and apples from his little orchard; given to the more diligent laborers many a valuable hint how to eke out the daily wage with garden produce, or bees, or poultry; doctored farmers' cows; and even won the heart of the stud groom by a mysterious sedative ball, which had reduced to serene docility a highly nervous and hitherto unmanageable four-year-old. Sophy had been no less popular. No one grudged her the favor of Lady Montfort—no one wondered at it. They were loved and honored. Perhaps the happiest years Waife had known since his young wife left the earth were passed in the hamlet which he fancied her shade haunted; for was it not there—there, in that cottage—there, in sight of those green osiers, that her first modest virgin replies to his letters of love and hope had soothed his confinement and animated him—till then little fond of sedentary toils—to the very industry which, learned in sport, now gave subsistence, and secured a home. To that home persecution had not come—gossip had not pryed into its calm seclusion—even chance, when threatening disclosure, had seemed to pass by innocuous. For once—a year or so before he left—an incident had occurred which alarmed him at the time, but led to no annoying results. The banks of the great sheet of water in Montfort Park were occasionally made the scene of rural picnics by the families of neighboring farmers and tradesmen. One day Waife, while carelessly fashioning his baskets on his favorite spot, was recognized by a party on the opposite margin to whom he himself had paid no attention. He was told the next day by the landlady of the village inn, the main chimney of which he had undertaken to cure of smoking, that a "lady" in the picnic symposium of the day before had asked many questions about him and his grandchild, and had seemed pleased to hear they were both so comfortably settled. The "lady" had been accompanied by another "lady," and by two or three young gentlemen. They had arrived in a "'buss," which they had hired for the occasion. They had come from Humberston the day after those famous races which annually filled Humberston with strangers—the time of year in which Rugge's grand theatrical exhibition delighted that ancient town. From the description of the two ladies, Waife suspected that they belonged to Rugge's company. But they had not claimed Waife as a cidevant comrade; they had not spoken of Sophy as the Phenomenon or the Fugitive. No molestation followed this event; and, after all, the Remorseless Baron had no longer any claim to the Persecuted Bandit or to Juliet Araminta.

But the ex-comedian is gone from the osiers—the hamlet. He is in his new retreat by the

lordly river—within an hour of the smoke and roar of tumultuous London. He tries to look cheerful and happy, but his repose is troubled—his heart is anxious. Ever since Sophy, on his account, refused the offer which would have transferred her, not for a few daily hours, but for habitual life, from a basket-maker's roof to all the elegances and refinements of a sphere in which, if freed from him, her charms and virtues might win her some such alliance as seemed impossible while he was thus dragging her down to his own level—ever since that day the old man had said to himself, "I live too long." While Sophy was by his side, he appeared busy at his work and merry in his humor; the moment she left him for Lady Montfort's house the work dropped from his hands, and he sank into moody thought.

Waife had written to Mrs. Crane (her address then was at Paris) on removing to Twickenham, and begged her to warn him, should Jasper meditate a return to England, by a letter directed to him at the General Post-office, London. Despite his later trust in Mrs. Crane, he did not deem it safe to confide to her Lady Montfort's offer to Sophy, or the affectionate nature of that lady's intimacy with the girl now grown into womanhood. With that insight into the human heart, which was in him not so habitually clear and steadfast as to be always useful, but at times singularly if erratically lucid, he could not feel assured that Arabella Crane's ancient hate to Sophy (which, lessening in proportion to the girl's destitution, had only ceased when the stern woman felt, with a sentiment bordering on revenge, that it was to her that Sophy owed an asylum obscure and humble) might not revive, if she learned that the child of a detested rival was raised above the necessity of her protection, and brought within view of that station so much loftier than her own, from which she had once rejoiced to know that the offspring of a marriage which had darkened her life was excluded. For indeed it had been only on Waife's promise that he would not repeat the attempt that had proved so abortive, to enforce Sophy's claim on Guy Darrell, that Arabella Crane had in the first instance resigned the child to his care. His care—his—an attainted outcast! As long as Arabella Crane could see in Sophy but an object of compassion she might haughtily protect her; but could Sophy become an object of envy, would that protection last? No, he did not venture to confide in Mrs. Crane further than to say that he and Sophy had removed from Montfort village to the vicinity of London. Time enough to say more when Mrs. Crane returned to England; and then not by letter, but in personal interview.

Once a month the old man went to London to inquire at the General Post-office for any communications his correspondent might there address to him. Only once, however, had he heard from Mrs. Crane since the announcement of his migration, and her note of reply was extremely brief, until in the fatal month of June, when Guy Darrell and Jasper Losely had alike returned, and on the same day, to the metropolis; and then the old man received from her a letter which occasioned him profound alarm. It apprised him not only that his terrible son was in England—in London; but that Jasper had discovered that the persons embarked for America were not the veritable Waife and Sophy, whose names they had assumed. Mrs. Crane ended with these ominous words: "It is right to say now that he has descended deeper and deeper. Could you see him, you would wonder that I neither abandon him nor my resolve. He hates me worse than the gibbet. To me, and not to the gibbet, he shall pass—fitting punishment to both. I am in London, not in my old house, but near him. His confidant is my hireling. His life and his projects are clear to my eyes—clear as if he dwelt in glass. Sophy is now of an age in which, were she placed in the care of some person whose respectability could not be impugned, she could not be legally forced away against her will; but if under your roof, those whom Jasper has induced to institute a search, that he has no means to institute very actively himself, might make statements which (as you are already aware) might persuade others, though well-meaning, to assist him in separating her from you. He might publicly face even a police court if he thus hoped to shame the rich man into buying off an intolerable scandal. He might, in the first instance, and more probably, decoy her into his power through stealth; and what might become of her before she was recovered? Separate yourself from her for a time. It is you, notwithstanding your arts of disguise, that can be the more easily tracked. She, now almost a woman, will have grown out of recognition. Place her in some secure asylum until at least you hear from me again."

Waife read and re-read this epistle (to which there was no direction that enabled him to reply) in the private room of a little coffee-house to which he had retired from the gaze and pressure of the streets. The determination he had long brooded over now began to take shape—to be hurried on to prompt decision. On recovering his first shock, he formed and matured his plans. That same evening he saw Lady Montfort. He felt that the time had come when, for Sophy's sake, he must lift the vail from the obloquy on his own name. To guard against the same concession to Jasper's authority that had betrayed her at Gatesboro', it was necessary that he should explain the mystery of Sophy's parentage and position to Lady Montfort, and go through the anguish of denouncing his own son as the last person to whose hands she should be consigned. He approached this subject not only with a sense of profound humiliation, but with no unreasonable fear lest Lady Montfort might at once decline a charge which would possibly subject her retirement to a harassing invasion. But, to his surprise as well as relief, no sooner had he named Sophy's parentage than Lady Montfort evinced emotions of a joy which cast into the shade all more painful or discreditable associations. "Henceforth, believe me," she said, "your Sophy shall be my own child, my own treasured darling! no humble companion—my equal as well as my charge. Fear not that any one shall tear her from me. You are right in thinking that my roof should be her home—that she should have the rearing and the station which she is entitled as well as fitted to adorn. But you must not part from her. I have listened to your tale; my experience of you supplies the defense you suppress—it re-

verses the judgment which has aspersed you. And, more ardently than before, I press on you a refuge in the Home that will shelter your grandchild." Noble-hearted woman! and nobler for her ignorance of the practical world, in the proposal which would have blistered with scorching blushes the cheek of that Personification of all "Solemn Plausibilities," the House of Vipont! Gentleman Waife was not scamp enough to profit by the ignorance which sprang from generous virtue. But, repressing all argument, and appearing to acquiesce in the possibility of such an arrangement, he left her benevolent delight unsaddened—and before the morning he was gone. Gone in stealth, and by the starlight, as he had gone years ago from the bailiff's cottage—gone, for Sophy, in waking, to find, as she had found before, farewell lines, that commended hope and forbade grief. "It was," he wrote, "for both their sakes that he had set out on a tour of pleasant adventure. He needed it; he had felt his spirits droop of late in so humdrum and settled a life. And there was danger abroad—danger that his brief absence would remove. He had confided all his secrets to Lady Montfort; she must look on that kind lady as her sole guardian till he returned—as return he surely would; and then they would live happy ever afterward as in fairy tales. He should never forgive her if she were silly enough to fret for him. He should not be alone; Sir Isaac would take care of him. He was not without plenty of money — savings of several months; if he wanted more, he would apply to George Morley. He would write to her occasionally; but she must not expect frequent letters; he might be away for months—what did that signify? He was old enough to take care of himself; she was no longer a child to cry her eyes out if she lost a senseless toy, or a stupid old cripple. She was a young lady, and he expected to find her a famous scholar when he returned." And so, with all flourish and bravado, and suppressing every attempt at pathos, the old man went his way, and Sophy, hurrying to Lady Montfort's, weeping, distracted, imploring her to send in all directions to discover and bring back the fugitive, was there detained a captive guest. But Waife left a letter also for Lady Montfort, cautioning and adjuring her, as she valued Sophy's safety from the scandal of Jasper's claim, not to make any imprudent attempts to discover him. Such attempt would only create the very publicity from the chance of which he was seeking to escape. The necessity of this caution was so obvious, that Lady Montfort could only send her most confidential servant to inquire guardedly in the neighborhood, until she had summoned George Morley from Humberston, and taken him into counsel. Waife had permitted her to relate to him, on strict promise of secrecy, the tale he had confided to her. George entered with the deepest sympathy into Sophy's distress; but he made her comprehend the indiscretion and peril of any noisy researches. He promised that he himself would spare no pains to ascertain the old man's hiding-place, and see, at least, if he could not be persuaded either to return or suffer her to join him, that he was not left destitute and comfortless. Nor was this an idle promise. George, though his inquiries were unceasing, crippled by the restraint imposed on them, was so acute in divining, and so active in following up each clew to the wanderer's artful doublings, that more than once he had actually come upon the track, and found the very spot where Waife or Sir Isaac had been seen a few days before. Still, up to the day on which Morley had last reported progress, the ingenious exactor, fertile in all resources of stratagem and disguise, had baffled his research. At first, however, Waife had greatly relieved the minds of these anxious friends, and cheered even Sophy's heavy heart, by letters, gay though brief. These letters having, by their postmarks, led to his trace, he had stated, in apparent anger, that reason for discontinuing them. And for the last six weeks no line from him had been received. In fact, the old man, on resolving to consummate his self-abnegation, strove more and more to wean his grandchild's thoughts from his image. He deemed it so essential to her whole future, that, now she had found a home in so secure and so elevated a sphere, she should gradually accustom herself to a new rank of life, from which he was an everlasting exile; should lose all trace of his very being; efface a connection that, ceasing to protect, could henceforth only harm and dishonor her; that he tried, as it were, to blot himself out of the world which now smiled on her. He did not underrate her grief in its first freshness: he knew that, could she learn where he was, all else would be forgotten—she would insist on flying to him. But he continually murmured to himself, "Youth is ever proverbially short of memory; its sorrows poignant, but not enduring; now the wounds are already scarring over—they will not reopen if they are left to heal."

He had, at first, thought of hiding somewhere not so far but that once a week, or once a month, he might have stolen into the grounds, looked at the house that held her—left, perhaps, in her walks some little token of himself. But, on reflection, he felt that that luxury would be too imprudent, and it ceased to tempt him in proportion as he reasoned himself into the stern wisdom of avoiding all that could revive her grief for him. At the commencement of this tale, in the outline given of that grand melodrama in which Juliet Araminta played the part of the Bandit's child, her efforts to decoy pursuit from the lair of the persecuted Mime were likened to the arts of the sky-lark to lure eye and hand from the nest of its young. More appropriate that illustration now to the parent-bird than then to the fledgeling. Farther and farther from the nest in which all his love was centred fled the old man. What if Jasper did discover him now; that very discovery would mislead the pursuit from Sophy. Most improbable that Losely would ever guess that they could become separated; still more improbable, unless Waife, imprudently lurking near her home, guided conjecture, that Losely should dream of seeking under the roof of the lofty peeress the child that had fled from Mr. Rugge.

Poor old man! his heart was breaking; but his soul was so brightly comforted, that there, where many, many long miles off, I see him standing, desolate and patient, in the corner of yon crowded market-place, holding Sir Isaac by slackened string, with listless hand—Sir Isaac unshorn, travel-stained, draggled, with drooping

head and melancholy eyes—yea, as I see him there, jostled by the crowd, to whom, now and then, pointing to that huge pannier on his arm, filled with some homely peddler-wares, he mechanically mutters, "Buy"—yea, I say, verily, as I see him thus, I can not draw near in pity—I see what the crowd does not—the shadow of an angel's wing over his gray head; and I stand reverentially aloof, with bated breath and bended knee.

CHAPTER IV.

A woman too often reasons from her heart—hence two-thirds of her mistakes and her troubles. A man of genius, too, often reasons from his heart—hence, also, two-thirds of his troubles and mistakes. Wherefore, between woman and genius there is a sympathetic affinity; each has some intuitive comprehension of the secrets of the other, and the more feminine the woman, the more exquisite the genius, the more subtle the intelligence between the two. But note well that this tacit understanding becomes obscured if human love pass across its relations. Shakspeare interprets aright the most intricate riddles in woman. A woman was the first to interpret aright the art that is latent in Shakspeare. But did Anne Hathaway and Shakspeare understand each other?

Unobserved by the two young people, Lady Montfort sate watching them as they moved along the river banks. She was seated where Lionel had first seen her—in the kind of grassy chamber that had been won from the foliage and the sward, closed round with interlaced autumnal branches, save where it opened toward the water. If ever woman's brain can conceive and plot a scheme thoroughly pure from one ungentle, selfish thread in its web, in such a scheme had Caroline Montfort brought together those two fair young natures. And yet they were not uppermost in her thoughts as she now gazed on them; nor was it wholly for them that her eyes were filled with tears at once sweet, yet profoundly mournful—holy, and yet intensely human.

Women love to think themselves uncomprehended—nor often without reason in that foible; for man, howsoever sagacious, rarely does entirely comprehend woman, howsoever simple. And in this her sex has the advantage over ours. Our hearts are bare to their eyes, even though they can never know what have been our lives. But we may see every action of their lives, guarded and circumscribed in conventional forms, while their hearts will have many mysteries to which we can never have the key. But, in more than the ordinary sense of the word, Caroline Montfort ever had been a woman uncomprehended. Nor even in her own sex did she possess one confidante. Only the outward leaves of that beautiful flower opened to the sunlight. The leaves round the core were gathered fold upon fold closely as when life itself was in the bud.

As all the years of her wedded existence her heart had been denied the natural household vents, so, by some strange and unaccountable chance, her intellect also seemed restrained and pent from its proper freedom and play. During those barren years she had read—she had pondered—she had enjoyed a commune with those whose minds instruct others, and still her own intelligence, which, in early youth, had been characterized by singular vivacity and brightness, and which Time had enriched with every womanly accomplishment, seemed chilled and objectless. It is not enough that a mind should be cultured—it should have movement as well as culture. Caroline Montfort's lay quiescent, like a beautiful form spell-bound to repose, but not to sleep. Looking on her once, as he stood among a crowd whom her beauty dazzled, a poet said, abruptly, "Were my guess not a sacrilege to one so spotless and so haughty, I should say that I had hit on the solution of an enigma that long perplexed me; and in the core of that queen of the lilies, could we strip the leaves folded round it, we should find *Remorse*."

Lady Montfort started; the shadow of another form than her own fell upon the sward. George Morley stood behind her, his finger on his lips. "Hush," he said in a whisper; "see, Sophy is looking for me up the river. I knew she would be—I stole this way on purpose—for I would speak to you before I face her questions."

"What is the matter?—you alarm me!" said Lady Montfort, on gaining a part of the grounds more remote from the river, to which George had silently led the way.

"Nay, my dear cousin, there is less cause for alarm than for anxious deliberation, and that upon more matters than those which directly relate to our poor fugitive. You know that I long shrunk from enlisting the police in aid of our search. I was too sensible of the pain and offense which such an application would occasion Waife—(let us continue so to call him)—and the discovery of it might even induce him to put himself beyond our reach, and quit England. But his prolonged silence, and my fears lest some illness or mishap might have befallen him, together with my serious apprehensions of the effect which unrelieved anxiety might produce on Sophy's health, made me resolve to wave former scruples. Since I last saw you I have applied to one of the higher police-officers accustomed to confidential investigations of a similar nature. The next day he came to tell me that he had learned that a friend of his, who had been formerly a distinguished agent in the detective police, had been engaged for months in tracking a person whom he conjectured to be the same as the one whom I had commissioned him to discover, and with somewhat less caution and delicacy than I had enjoined. The fugitive's real name had been given to this ex-agent—the cause for search, that he had abducted and was concealing his grand-daughter from her father. It was easy for me to perceive why this novel search had hitherto failed, no suspicion being entertained that Waife had separated himself from Sophy, and the inquiry being therefore rather directed toward the grandchild than the grandfather. But that inquiry had altogether ceased of late, and for this terrible reason—a different section of the police had fixed its eye upon the father on whose behalf the search had been instituted. This Jasper Losely (ah! our poor friend might well shudder to think Sophy should fall into his hands!) haunts the resorts of the most lawless and formidable desperadoes of London. He appears to be a kind of authority among them; but there is no evidence that as yet he has committed himself to any participation in their habitual courses. He lives pro-

fusely, for a person in such society (regaling Daredevils, whom he awes by a strength and courage which are described as extraordinary), but without any visible means. It seems that the ex-agent, who had been thus previously employed in Jasper Losely's name, had been engaged, not by Jasper himself, but by a person in very respectable circumstances, whose name I have ascertained to be Poole. And the ex-agent deemed it right to acquaint this Mr. Poole with Jasper's evil character and ambiguous mode of life, and to intimate to his employer that it might not be prudent to hold any connection with such a man, and still less proper to assist in restoring a young girl to his care. On this Mr. Poole became so much agitated, and expressed himself so incoherently as to his relations with Jasper, that the ex-agent conceived suspicions against Poole himself, and reported the whole circumstances to one of the chiefs of the former service, through whom they reached the very man whom I myself was employing. But this ex-agent, who had, after his last interview with Poole, declined all farther interference, had since then, through a correspondent in a country town, whom he had employed at the first, obtained a clew to my dear old friend's wanderings, more recent, and I think more hopeful, than any I had yet discovered. You will remember that when questioning Sophy as to any friends in her former life to whom it was probable Waife might have addressed himself, she could think of no one *so* probable as a cobbler named Merle, with whom he and she had once lodged, and of whom he had often spoken to her with much gratitude, as having put him in the way of recovering herself, and having shown him a peculiar trustful kindness on that occasion. But you will remember also that I could not find this Merle; he had left the village, near this very place, in which he had spent the greater part of his life—his humble trade having been neglected in consequence of some strange superstitious occupations in which, as he had grown older, he had become more and more absorbed. He had fallen into poverty; his effects had been sold off; he had gone away no one knew whither. Well, the ex-agent, who had also been directed to this Merle by his employer, had, through his correspondent, ascertained that the cobbler was living at Norwich, where he passed under the name of the Wise Man, and where he was in perpetual danger of being sent to the house of correction as an impostor, dealing in astrology, crystal-seeing, and such silly or nefarious practices. Very odd, indeed, and very melancholy too," quoth the scholar, lifting up his hands and eyes, "that a man so gifted as our poor friend should ever have cultivated an acquaintance with a cobbler who deals in the Black Art!"

"Sophy has talked to me much about that cobbler," said Lady Montfort, with her sweet half-smile. "It was under his roof that she first saw Lionel Haughton. But though the poor man may be an ignorant enthusiast, he is certainly, by her account, too kind and simple-hearted to be a designing impostor."

George. "Possibly. But, to go on with my story: A few weeks ago, an elderly lame man, accompanied by a dog, who was evidently poor dear Sir Isaac, lodged two days with Merle at Norwich. On hearing this, I myself went yesterday to Norwich, saw and talked to Merle, and through this man I hope, more easily, delicately, and expeditiously than by any other means, to achieve our object. He evidently can assist us, and, as evidently, Waife has not told him that he is flying from Sophy and friends, but from enemies and persecutors. For Merle, who is impervious to bribes, and who at first was churlish and rude, became softened as my honest affection for the fugitive grew clear to him, and still more when I told him how wretched Sophy was at her grandfather's disappearance, and that she might fret herself into a decline. And we parted with this promise on his side, that if I would bring down to him either Sophy herself (which is out of the question), or a line from her, which, in referring to any circumstances while under his roof that could only be known to her and himself, should convince him that the letter was from her hand, assuring him that it was for Waife's benefit and at her prayer that he should bestir himself in the search for her grandfather, and that he might implicitly trust to me, he would do all he could to help us. So far, then, so good. But I have now more to say, and that is in reference to Sophy herself. While we are tracking her grandfather, the peril to her is not lessened. Never was that peril thoroughly brought before my eyes until I had heard actually from the police agent the dreadful character and associations of the man who can claim her in a father's name. Waife, it is true, had told you that his son was profligate, spendthrift, lawless—sought her, not from natural affection, but as an instrument to be used, roughly and coarsely, for the purpose of extorting money from Mr. Darrell. But this stops far short of the terrible reality. Imagine the effect on her nerves, so depressed as they now are, nay, on her very life, should this audacious miscreant force himself here and say, 'Come with me, you are my child!' And are we quite sure that out of some refining nobleness of conscience she might not imagine it her duty to obey, and to follow him? The more abject and friendless his condition, the more she might deem it her duty to be by his side. I have studied her from childhood. She is capable of any error in judgment, if it be made to appear a martyr's devoted self-sacrifice. You may well shudder, my dear cousin. But grant that she were swayed by us and by the argument that so to act would betray and kill her beloved grandfather, still, in resisting this ruffian's paternal authority, what violent and painful scenes might ensue! What dreadful publicity to be attached forever to her name! Nor is this all. Grant that her father does not discover her, but that he is led by his associates into some criminal offense, and suffers by the law—her relationship, both to him from whom you would guard her, and to him whose hearth you have so tenderly reared her to grace, suddenly dragged to day—would not the shame kill her? And in that disclosure how keen would be the anguish of Darrell!"

"Oh Heavens!" cried Caroline Montfort, white as ashes, and wringing her hands, "you freeze me with terror. But this man can not be so fallen as you describe. I have seen him—spoken with him in his youth—hoped then to assist in a task of conciliation, pardon. Nothing about him then forboded so fearful a cor-

ruption. He might be vain, extravagant, selfish, false—ah, yes! he was false indeed!—but still the ruffian you paint, banded with common criminals, can not be the same as the gay, dainty, perfumed, fair-faced adventurer with whom my ill-fated playmate fled her father's house. You shake your head—what is it you advise?"

"To expedite your own project—to make at once the resolute attempt to secure to this poor child her best, her most rightful protector—to let whatever can be done to guard her from danger, or reclaim her father from courses to which despair may be driving him—to let, I say, all this be done by the person whose interest in doing it effectively is so paramount—whose ability to judge of and decide on the wisest means is so immeasurably superior to all that lies within our own limited experience of life."

"But you forget that our friend told me that he had appealed to—to Mr. Darrell on his return to England; that Mr. Darrell had peremptorily refused to credit the claim; and had sternly said that, even if Sophy's birth could be proved, he would not place under her father's roof the grandchild of William Losely."

"True; and yet you hoped reasonably enough to succeed where he, poor outcast, had failed."

"Yes, yes; I did hope that Sophy—her manners formed, her education completed—all her natural exquisite graces so cultured and refined as to justify pride in the proudest kindred—I did hope that she should be brought, as it were by accident, under his notice; that she would interest and charm him; and that the claim, when made, might thus be welcomed with delight. Mr. Darrell's abrupt return to a seclusion so rigid forbids the opportunity that might easily have been found or made if he had remained in London. But suddenly, violently to renew a claim that such a man has rejected, before he has ever seen that dear child—before his heart and his taste plead for her—who would dare to do it? or, if so daring, who could hope success?"

"My dear Lady Montfort, my noble cousin, with repute as spotless as the ermine of your robe—who but you?"

"Who but I? Any one. Mr. Darrell would not even read through a letter addressed to him by me?"

George stared with astonishment. Caroline's face was downcast—her attitude that of profound humiliated dejection.

"Incredible!" said he, at length. "I have always suspected, and so indeed has my uncle, that Darrell had some cause of complaint against your mother. Perhaps he might have supposed that she had not sufficiently watched over his daughter, or had not sufficiently inquired into the character of the governess whom she recommended to him; and that this had led to an estrangement between Darrell and your mother which could not fail to extend somewhat to yourself. But such misunderstandings can surely now be easily removed. Talk of his not reading a letter addressed to him by you! Why, do I not remember, when I was on a visit to my school-fellow, his son, what influence you, a mere child yourself, had over that grave, busy man, then in the height of his career—how you alone could run without awe into his study—how you alone had the privilege to arrange his books, sort his papers—so that we two boys looked on you with a solemn respect, as the depositary of all his state secrets—how vainly you tried to decoy that poor timid Matilda, his daughter, into a share of your own audacity!—Is not all this true?"

"Oh yes, yes—old days, gone forever!"

"Do I not remember how you promised that, before I went back to school, I should hear Darrell read aloud—how you brought the volume of Milton to him in the evening—how he said, 'No, to-morrow night; I must go now to the House of Commons'—how I marveled to hear you answer, boldly, 'To-morrow night George will have left us, and I have promised that he shall hear you read'—and how, looking at you under those dark brows with serious softness, he said, 'Right; promises, once given, must be kept. But was it not rash to promise in another's name?'—and you answered, half gently, half pettishly, 'As if *you* could fail me!' He took the book without another word, and read. What reading it was, too! And do you not remember another time, how—"

Lady Montfort (interrupting with nervous impatience). "Ay, ay—I need no reminding of all—all! Kindest, noblest, gentlest friend to a giddy, heedless child, unable to appreciate the blessing. But now, George, I dare not, I can not write to Mr. Darrell."

George mused a moment, and conjectured that Lady Montfort had, in the inconsiderate, impulsive season of youth, aided in the clandestine marriage of Darrell's daughter, and had become thus associated in his mind with the affliction that had imbittered his existence. Were this so, certainly she would not be the fitting intercessor on behalf of Sophy. His thoughts then turned to his uncle, Darrell's earliest friend, not suspecting that Colonel Morley was actually the person whom Darrell had already appointed his adviser and representative in all transactions that might concern the very parties under discussion. But just as he was about to suggest the expediency of writing to Alban to return to England, and taking him into confidence and consultation, Lady Montfort resumed, in a calmer voice, and with a less troubled countenance,

"Who should be the pleader for one whose claim, if acknowledged, would affect his own fortunes, but Lionel Haughton? Hold!—look where yonder they come into sight—there, by the gap in the evergreens. May we not hope that Providence, bringing those two beautiful lives together, gives a solution to the difficulties which thwart our action and embarrass our judgment? I conceived and planned a blissful romance the first moment I gathered from Sophy's artless confidences the effect that had been produced on her whole train of thought and feeling by the first meeting with Lionel in her childhood; by his brotherly, chivalrous kindness, and, above all, by the chance words he let fall, which discontented her with a life of shift and disguise, and revealed to her the instincts of her own honest, truthful nature. An alliance between Lionel Haughton and Sophy seemed to me the happiest possible event that could befall Guy Darrell. The two branches of his family united—a painful household secret confined to the circle of his own kindred—grant-

ing Sophy's claim never perfectly cleared up, but subject to a tormenting doubt—her future equally assured—her possible rights equally established—Darrell's conscience and pride reconciled to each other. And how, even but as wife to his young kinsman, he would learn to love one so exquisitely endearing!" [Lady Montfort paused a moment, and then resumed.] "When I heard that Mr. Darrell was about to marry again, my project was necessarily arrested."

"Certainly," said George, "if he formed new ties, Sophy would be less an object in his existence, whether or not he recognized her birth. The alliance between her and Lionel would lose many of its advantages; and any address to him on Sophy's behalf would become yet more ungraciously received."

Lady Montfort. "In that case I had resolved to adopt Sophy as my own child; lay by from my abundant income an ample dowry for her; and whether Mr. Darrell ever knew it or not, at least I should have the secret joy to think that I was saving him from the risk of remorse hereafter — should she be, as we believe, his daughter's child, and have been thrown upon the world destitute;—yes, the secret joy of feeling that I was sheltering, fostering as a mother, one whose rightful home might be with him who in my childhood sheltered, fostered me!"

George (much affected). "How, in proportion as we know you, the beauty which you vail from the world outshines that which you can not prevent the world from seeing! But you must not let this grateful enthusiasm blind your better judgment. You think these young persons are beginning to be really attached to each other. Then it is the more necessary that no time should be lost in learning how Mr. Darrell would regard such a marriage. I do not feel so assured of his consent as you appear to do. At all events, this should be ascertained before their happiness is seriously involved. I agree with you that Lionel is the best intermediator to plead for Sophy; and his very generosity in urging her prior claim to a fortune that might otherwise pass to him, is likely to have weight with a man so generous himself as Guy Darrell is held to be. But does Lionel yet know all? Have you yet ventured to confide to him, or even to Sophy herself, the nature of her claim on the man who so proudly denies it?"

"No—I deemed it due to Sophy's pride of sex to imply to her that she would, in fortune and in social position, be entitled to equality with those whom she might meet here. And that is true, if only as the child whom I adopt and enrich. I have not said more. And only since Lionel has appeared has she ever seemed interested in any thing that relates to her parentage. From the recollection of her father she naturally shrinks—she never mentions his name. But two days ago she did ask timidly, and with great change of countenance, if it was through her mother that she was entitled to a rank higher than she had hitherto known; and when I answered 'Yes,' she sighed, and said, 'But my dear grandfather never spoke to me of her; he never even saw my mother.'"

George. "And you, I suspect, do not much like to talk of that mother. I have gathered from you, unawares to yourself, that she was not a person you could highly praise; and to me, as a boy, she seemed, with all her timidity, wayward and deceitful."

Lady Montfort. "Alas! how bitterly she must have suffered—and how young she was! But you are right; I can not speak to Sophy of her mother, the subject is connected with so much sorrow. But I told her 'that she should know all soon;' and she said, with a sweet and melancholy patience, 'When my poor grandfather will be by to hear: I can wait.'"

George. "But is Lionel, with his quick intellect and busy imagination, equally patient? Does he not guess at the truth? You have told him that you do meditate a project which affects Guy Darrell, and required his promise not to divulge to Darrell his visits in this house."

Lady Montfort. "He knows that Sophy's paternal grandfather was William Losely. From your uncle he heard William Losely's story, and—"

George. "My uncle Alban?"

Lady Montfort. "Yes; the Colonel was well acquainted with the elder Losely in former days, and spoke of him to Lionel with great affection. It seems that Lionel's father knew him also, and thoughtlessly involved him in his own pecuniary difficulties. Lionel was not long a visitor here before he asked me abruptly if Mr. Waife's real name was not Losely. I was obliged to own it, begging him not at present to question me further. He said, then, with much emotion, that he had a hereditary debt to discharge to William Losely, and that he was the last person who ought to relinquish belief in the old man's innocence of the crime for which the law had condemned him, or to judge him harshly if the innocence were not substantiated. You remember with what eagerness he joined in your search, until you positively forbade his interposition, fearing that should our poor friend hear of inquiries instituted by one whom he could not recognize as a friend, and might possibly consider an emissary of his son's, he would take yet greater pains to conceal himself. But from the moment that Lionel learned that Sophy's grandfather was William Losely his manner to Sophy became yet more tenderly respectful. He has a glorious nature, that young man! But did your uncle never speak to you of William Losely?"

"No. I am not surprised at that. My uncle Alban avoids 'painful subjects.' I am only surprised that he should have revived a painful subject in talk to Lionel. But I now understand why, when Waife first heard my name, he seemed affected, and why he so specially enjoined me never to mention or describe him to my friends and relations. Then Lionel knows Losely's story, but not his son's connection with Darrell?"

"Certainly not. He knows but what is generally said in the world, that Darrell's daughter eloped with a Mr. Hammond, a man of inferior birth, and died abroad, leaving but one child, who is also dead. Still Lionel does suspect—my very injunctions of secrecy must make him more than suspect—that the Loselys are somehow or other mixed up with Darrell's family history. Hush! I hear his voice yonder—they approach."

"My dear cousin, let it be settled between

us, then, that you frankly and without delay communicate to Lionel the whole truth, so far as it is known to us, and put it to him how best and most touchingly to move Mr. Darrell toward her, of whom we hold him to be the natural protector. I will write to my uncle to return to England, that he may assist us in the same good work. Meanwhile, I shall have only good tidings to communicate to Sophy in my new hopes to discover her grandfather through Merle."

Here, as the sun was setting, Lionel and Sophy came in sight; above their heads, the western clouds bathed in gold and purple. Sophy, perceiving George, bounded forward, and reached his side, breathless.

CHAPTER V.

Lionel Haughton having lost his heart, it is no longer a question what HE will do with it. But what will be done with it is a very grave question indeed.

Lionel forestalled Lady Montfort in the delicate and embarrassing subject which her cousin had urged her to open. For while George, leading away Sophy, informed her of his journey to Norwich, and his interview with Merle, Lionel drew Lady Montfort into the house, and with much agitation, and in abrupt, hurried accents, implored her to withdraw the promise which forbade him to inform his benefactor how and where his time had been spent of late. He burst forth with a declaration of that love with which Sophy had inspired him, and which Lady Montfort could not be but prepared to hear. "Nothing," said he, "but a respect for her more than filial anxiety at this moment could have kept my heart thus long silent. But that heart is so deeply pledged—so utterly hers—that it has grown an ingratitude, a disrespect to my generous kinsman, to conceal from him any longer the feelings which must color my whole future existence. Nor can I say to her, 'Can you return my affection?—will you listen to my vows?—will you accept them at the altar?'—until I have won, as I am sure to win, the approving consent of my more than father."

"You feel sure to win that consent, in spite of the stain on her grandfather's name?"

"When Darrell learns that, but for my poor father's fault, that name might be spotless now—yes! I am not Mr. Darrell's son—the transmitter of his line. I believe yet that he will form new ties. By my mother's side I have no ancestors to boast of; and you have owned to me that Sophy's mother was of gentle birth. Alban Morley told me, when I last saw him, that Darrell wishes me to marry, and leaves me free to choose my bride. Yes; I have no doubt of Mr. Darrell's consent. My dear mother will welcome to her heart the prize so coveted by mine; and Charles Haughton's son will have a place at his hearth for the old age of William Losely. Withdraw your interdict at once, dearest Lady Montfort, and confide to me all that you have hitherto left unexplained, but have promised to reveal when the time came. The time has come."

"It has come," said Lady Montfort, solemnly; "and Heaven grant that it may bear the blessed results which were in my thoughts when I took Sophy as my own adopted daughter, and hailed in yourself the reconciler of conflicting circumstance. Not under this roof should you woo William Losely's grandchild. Doubly are you bound to ask Guy Darrell's consent and blessing. At his hearth woo your Sophy—at his hands ask a bride in his daughter's child."

And to her wondering listener, Caroline Montfort told her grounds for the belief that connected the last of the Darrells with the convict's grandchild.

CHAPTER VI.

Credulous crystal-seers, young lovers, and grave wise men—all in the same category.

George Morley set out the next day for Norwich, in which antique city, ever since the Dane peopled it, some wizard or witch, star-reader, or crystal-seer has enjoyed a mysterious renown, perpetuating thus through all change in our land's social progress the long line of Vala and Saga, who came with the Raven and Valkyr from the Scandinavian pine shores. Merle's reserve vanished on the perusal of Sophy's letter to him. He informed George that Waife declared he had plenty of money, and had even forced a loan upon Merle; but that he liked an active, wandering life; it kept him from thinking, and that a peddler's pack would give him a license for vagrancy, and a budget to defray its expenses; that Merle had been consulted by him in the choice of light popular wares, and as to the route he might find the most free from competing rivals. Merle willingly agreed to accompany George in quest of the wanderer, whom, by the help of his crystal, he seemed calmly sure he could track and discover. Accordingly, they both set out in the somewhat devious and desultory road which Merle, who had some old acquaintances among the ancient profession of hawkers, had advised Waife to take. But Merle, unhappily confiding more in his crystal than Waife's steady adherence to the chart prescribed, led the Oxford scholar the life of a will-of-the-wisp; zigzag, and shooting to and fro, here and there, till, just when George had lost all patience, Merle chanced to see, not in the crystal, a *pelerine* on the neck of a farmer's daughter, which he was morally certain he had himself selected for Waife's pannier. And the girl stating, in reply to his inquiry, that her father had bought that *pelerine* as a present for her, not many days before, of a peddler in a neighboring town, to the market of which the farmer resorted weekly, Merle cast a horary scheme, and finding the Third House (of short journeys) in favorable aspect to the Seventh House (containing the object desired), and in conjunction with the Eleventh House (friends), he gravely informed the scholar that their toils were at an end, and that the Hour and the Man were at hand. Not oversanguine, George consigned himself and the seer to an early train, and reached the famous town of Ouzelford, whither, when the chronological order of our narrative (which we have so far somewhat forestalled) will permit, we shall conduct the inquisitive reader.

Meanwhile Lionel, subscribing without a murmur to Lady Montfort's injunction to see Sophy no more till Darrell had been conferred with

and his consent won, returned to his lodgings in London, sanguine of success and flushed with joy. His intention was to set out at once to Fawley; but on reaching town he found there a few lines from Darrell himself, in reply to a long and affectionate letter which Lionel had written a few days before, asking permission to visit the old manor-house; for amidst all his absorbing love for Sophy, the image of his lonely benefactor in that gloomy hermitage often rose before him. In these lines Darrell, not unkindly, but very peremptorily, declined Lionel's overtures. "In truth, my dear young kinsman," wrote the recluse—"in truth I am, with slowness, and with frequent relapses, laboring through convalescence from a moral fever. My nerves are yet unstrung. I am as one to whom is prescribed the most complete repose—the visits, even of friends the dearest, forbidden as a perilous excitement. The sight of you—of any one from the great world—but especially of one whose rich vitality of youth and hope affronts and mocks my own fatigued exhaustion, would but irritate, unsettle, torture me. When I am quite well I will ask you to come. I shall enjoy your visit. Till then, on no account, and on no pretext, let my morbid ear catch the sound of your footfall on my quiet floor. Write to me often, but tell me nothing of the news and gossip of the world. Tell me only of yourself, your studies, your thoughts, your sentiments, your wishes. Nor forget my injunctions. Marry young, marry for love; let no ambition of power, no greed of gold, ever mislead you into giving to your life a companion who is not the half of your soul. Choose with the heart of a man; I know that you will choose with the self-esteem of a gentleman; and be assured beforehand of the sympathy and sanction of your

"Churlish but Loving Kinsman."

After this letter, Lionel felt that, at all events, he could not at once proceed to the old manor-house in defiance of its owner's prohibition. He wrote briefly, entreating Darrell to forgive him if he persisted in the prayer to be received at Fawley, stating that his desire for a personal interview was now suddenly become special and urgent; that it not only concerned himself, but affected his benefactor. By return of post Darrell replied with curt frigidity, repeating, with even sternness, his refusal to receive Lionel, but professing himself ready to attend to all that his kinsman might address to him by letter. "If it be as you state," wrote Darrell, with his habitual irony, "a matter that relates to myself, I claim, as a lawyer for my own affairs—the precaution I once enjoined to my clients—a written brief should always precede a personal consultation."

In fact, the proud man suspected that Lionel had been directly or indirectly addressed on behalf of Jasper Losely; and certainly that was the last subject on which he would have granted an interview to his young kinsman. Lionel, however, was not perhaps sorry to be thus compelled to trust to writing his own and Sophy's cause. Darrell was one of those men whose presence inspires a certain awe — one of those men whom we feel, upon great occasions, less embarrassed to address by letter than in person. Lionel's pen moved rapidly—his whole heart and soul suffused with feeling, and, rushing over the page, he reminded Darrell of the day when he had told to the rich man the tale of the lovely wandering child, and how, out of his sympathy for that child, Darrell's approving, fostering tenderness to himself had grown. Thus indirectly to her forlorn condition had he owed the rise in his own fortunes. He went through the story of William Losely as he had gathered it from Alban Morley, and touched pathetically on his own father's share in that dark history. If William Losely really was hurried into crime by the tempting necessity for a comparatively trifling sum, but for Charles Haughton, would the necessity have arisen? Eloquently then the lover united grandfather and grandchild in one touching picture—their love for each other, their dependence on each other. He enlarged on Sophy's charming, unselfish, simple, noble character; he told how he had again found her; he dwelt on the refining accomplishments she owed to Lady Montfort's care. How came she with Lady Montfort? Why had Lady Montfort cherished, adopted her? Because Lady Montfort told him how much her own childhood had owed to Darrell; because, should Sophy be, as alleged, the offspring of his daughter, the heiress of his line, Caroline Montfort rejoiced to guard her from danger, save her from poverty, and ultimately thus to fit her to be not only acknowledged with delight, but with pride. Why had he been enjoined not to divulge to Darrell that he had again found, and under Lady Montfort's roof, the child whom, while yet unconscious of her claims, Darrell himself had vainly sought to find, and benevolently designed to succor? Because Lady Montfort wished to fulfill her task — complete Sophy's education, interrupted by grief for her missing grandfather, and obtain indeed, when William Losely again returned, some proofs (if such existed) to corroborate the assertion of Sophy's parentage. "And," added Lionel, "Lady Montfort seems to fear that she has given you some cause of displeasure—what I know not, but which might have induced you to disapprove of the acquaintance I had begun with her. Be that as it may, would you could hear the reverence with which she ever alludes to your worth—the gratitude with which she attests her mother's and her own early obligations to your intellect and heart!" Finally, Lionel wove all his threads of recital into the confession of the deep love into which his romantic memories of Sophy's wandering childhood had been ripened by the sight of her graceful, cultured youth. "Grant," he said, "that her father's tale be false —and no doubt you have sufficient reasons to discredit it—still, if you can not love her as your daughter's child, receive, know her, I implore—let her love and revere you—as my wife! Leave me to protect her from a lawless father—leave me to redeem, by some deeds of loyalty and honor, any stain that her grandsire's sentence may seem to fix upon our union. Oh! if ambitious before, how ambitious I should be now —to efface, for her sake as for mine, her grandsire's shame, my father's errors! But if, on the other hand, she should, on the requisite inquiries, be proved to descend from your ancestry—your father's blood in her pure veins—I know, alas! then that I should have no right to aspire to such nuptials. Who would even think of her

descent from a William Losely? Who would not be too proud to remember only her descent from you? All spots would vanish in the splendor of your renown; the highest in the land would court her alliance. And I am but the pensioner of your bounty, and only on my father's side of gentle origin. But still I think you would not reject me—you would place the future to my credit; and I would wait, wait patiently, till I had won such a soldier's name as would entitle me to mate with a daughter of the Darrells."

Sheet upon sheet the young eloquence flowed on—seeking, with an art of which the writer was unconscious, all the arguments and points of view which might be the most captivating to the superb pride or to the exquisite tenderness which seemed to Lionel the ruling elements of Darrell's character.

He had not to wait long for a reply. At the first glance of the address on its cover his mind misgave him; the hopes that had hitherto elated his spirit yielded to abrupt forebodings. Darrell's handwriting was habitually in harmony with the intonations of his voice—singularly clear, formed with a peculiar and original elegance, yet with the undulating ease of a natural, candid, impulsive character. And that decorous care in such mere trifles as the very sealing of a letter, which, neglected by musing poets and abstracted authors, is observable in men of high public station, was in Guy Darrell significant of the Patrician dignity that imparted a certain stateliness to his most ordinary actions.

But in the letter which lay in Lionel's hand the writer was scarcely recognizable—the direction blurred, the characters dashed off from a pen fierce yet tremulous; the seal a great blotch of wax; the device of the heron, with its soaring motto, indistinct and mangled, as if the stamping instrument had been plucked wrathfully away before the wax had cooled. And when Lionel opened the letter, the handwriting within was yet more indicative of mental disorder. The very ink looked menacing and angry—blacker as the pen had been forcibly driven into the page.

"Unhappy boy!" began the ominous epistle, "is it through you that the false and detested woman who has withered up the noonday of my life seeks to dishonor its blighted close? Talk not to me of Lady Montfort's gratitude and reverence! Talk not to me of her amiable, tender, holy aim, to obtrude upon my childless house the grand-daughter of a convicted felon! Show her these lines, and ask her by what knowledge of my nature she can assume that ignominy to my name would be a blessing to my hearth? Ask her, indeed, how she can dare to force herself still upon my thoughts—dare to imagine she can lay me under obligations—dare to think she can be a something still in my forlorn existence! Lionel Haughton, I command you, in the name of all the dead whom we can claim as ancestors in common, to tear from your heart, as you would tear a thought of disgrace, this image which has bewitched your reason. My daughter, thank Heaven, left no pledge of an execrable union. But a girl who has been brought up by a thief—a girl whom a wretch so lost to honor as Jasper Losely sought to make an instrument of fraud to my harassment and disgrace, be her virtues and beauty what they may, I could not, without intolerable anguish, contemplate as the wife of Lionel Haughton. But *receive* her as your wife! Admit her within these walls! Never, never; I scorn to threaten you with loss of favor, loss of fortune. Marry her if you will. You shall have an ample income secured to you. But from that moment our lives are separated—our relation ceases. You will never again see nor address me. But oh, Lionel! can you—can you inflict upon me this crowning sorrow? Can you, for the sake of a girl of whom you have seen but little, or in the Quixotism of atonement for your father's fault, complete the ingratitude I have experienced from those who owed me most? I can not think it. I rejoice that you wrote—did not urge this suit in person. I should not have been able to control my passion; we might have parted foes. As it is, I restrain myself with difficulty! That woman, that child, associated thus to tear from me the last affection left to my ruined heart! No! You will not be so cruel! Send this, I command you, to Lady Montfort. See again neither her nor the impostor she has been cherishing for my disgrace. This letter will be your excuse to break off with both—with both!

"Guy Darrell."

Lionel was stunned. Not for several hours could he recover self-possession enough to analyze his own emotions, or discern the sole course that lay before him. After such a letter from such a benefactor, no option was left to him. Sophy must be resigned; but the sacrifice crushed him to the earth—crushed the very manhood out of him. He threw himself on the floor, sobbing—sobbing, as if body and soul were torn, each from each, in convulsive spasms.

But send this letter to Lady Montfort! A letter so wholly at variance with Darrell's dignity of character—a letter in which rage seemed lashed to unreasoning frenzy! Such bitter language of hate and scorn, and even insult, to a woman, and to the very woman who had seemed to Lionel so reverently to cherish the writer's name—so tenderly to scheme for the writer's happiness! Could he obey a command that seemed to lower Darrell even more than it could humble her to whom it was to be sent?

Yet disobey! What but the letter itself could explain! Ah—and was there not some strange misunderstanding with respect to Lady Montfort, which the letter itself, and nothing but the letter, would enable her to dispel; and if dispelled, might not Darrell's whole mind undergo a change? A flash of joy suddenly broke on his agitated, tempestuous thoughts. He forced himself again to read those blotted, impetuous lines. Evidently—evidently, while writing to Lionel—the subject Sophy—the man's wrathful heart had been addressing itself to neither. A suspicion seized him; with that suspicion, hope. He would send the letter, and with but few words from himself—words that revealed his immense despair at the thought of relinquishing Sophy—intimated his belief that Darrell here was, from some error of judgment which Lionel could not comprehend, avenging himself on Lady Montfort; and closed with his prayer to her, if so, to forgive lines colored by hasty pas-

sion, and, for the sake of all, not to disdain that self-vindication which might perhaps yet soften a nature possessed of such depths of sweetness as that which appeared now so cruel and so bitter! He would not yet despond—not yet commission her to give his last farewell to Sophy.

CHAPTER VII.

The Man-eater continues to take his quiet steak out of Dolly Poole, and is in turn subjected to the anatomical knife of the dissecting Author. Two traps are laid for him—one by his fellow Man-eaters—one by that deadly persecutrix, the Woman who tries to save him in spite of all he can do to be hanged.

Meanwhile the unhappy Adolphus Poole had been the reluctant but unfailing source from which Jasper Losely had weekly drawn the supplies to his worthless and workless existence. Never was a man more constrainedly benevolent, and less recompensed for pecuniary sacrifice by applauding conscience, than the doomed inhabitant of Alhambra Villa. In the utter failure of his attempts to discover Sophy, or to induce Jasper to accept Colonel Morley's proposals, he saw this parasital monster fixed upon his entrails, like the vulture on those of the classic sufferer in mythological tales. Jasper, indeed, had accommodated himself to this regular and unlaborious mode of gaining "*sa pauvre vie*." To call once a week upon his old acquaintance, frighten him with a few threats, or force a death-like smile from agonizing lips by a few villainous jokes, carry off his four sovereigns, and enjoy himself thereon till pay-day duly returned, was a condition of things that Jasper did not greatly care to improve; and truly had he said to Poole that his earlier energy had left him. As a sensualist of Jasper's stamp grows older and falls lower, indolence gradually usurps the place once occupied by vanity or ambition. Jasper was bitterly aware that his old comeliness was gone; that never more could he ensnare a maiden's heart or a widow's gold. And when this truth was fully brought home to him, it made a strange revolution in all his habits. He cared no longer for dress and gewgaws—sought rather to hide himself than to parade. In the neglect of the person he had once so idolized—in the coarse roughness which now characterized his exterior—there was that sullen despair which the vain only know when what had made them dainty and jocund is gone forever. The human mind, in deteriorating, fits itself to the sphere into which it declines. Jasper would not now, if he could, have driven a cabriolet down St. James's Street. He had taken more and more to the vice of drinking as the excitement of gambling was withdrawn from him. For how gamble with those who had nothing to lose, and to whom he himself would have been pigeon, not hawk? And as he found that, on what he thus drew regularly from Dolly Poole, he could command all the comforts that his imbruted tastes now desired, so an odd kind of prudence, for the first time in his life, came with what he chose to consider "a settled income." He mixed with ruffians in their nightly orgies; treated them to cheap potations; swaggered, bullied, boasted, but shared in no project of theirs which might bring into jeopardy the life which Dolly Poole rendered so comfortable and secure. His energies, once so restless, were lulled, partly by habitual intoxication, partly by the physical pains which had nestled themselves into his robust fibres, efforts of an immense and still tenacious vitality to throw off diseases repugnant to its native magnificence of health. The finest constitutions are those which, when once seriously impaired, occasion the direst pain; but they also enable the sufferer to bear pain that would soon wear away the delicate. And Jasper bore his pains stoutly, though at times they so exasperated his temper, that woe then to any of his comrades whose want of caution or respect gave him the occasion to seek relief in wrath! His hand was as heavy, his arm as stalwart as ever. George Morley had been rightly informed. Even by burglars and cutthroats, whose dangers he shunned, while fearlessly he joined their circle, Jasper Losely was regarded with terror. To be the awe of reckless men, as he had been the admiration of foolish women, this was delight to his vanity—the last delight that was left to it. But he thus provoked a danger to which his arrogance was blind. His boon companions began to grow tired of him. He had been welcomed to their resort on the strength of the catch-word or passport which confederates at Paris had communicated to him, and of the reputation for great daring and small scruple which he took from Cutts, who was of high caste among their mysterious tribes, and who every now and then flitted over the Continent, safe and accursed as the Wandering Jew. But when they found that this Achilles of the Greeks would only talk big, and employ his wits on his private exchequer and his thews against themselves, they began not only to tire of his imperious manner, but to doubt his fidelity to the cause. And all of a sudden, Cutts, who had at first extolled Jasper as one likely to be a valuable acquisition to the Family of Night, altered his tone, and insinuated that the bravo was not to be trusted; that his reckless temper and incautious talk when drunk would unfit him for a safe accomplice in any skillful project of plunder; and that he was so unscrupulous, and had so little sympathy with their class, that he might be quite capable of playing spy or turning king's evidence; that, in short, it would be well to rid themselves of his domineering presence. Still there was that physical power in this lazy Hercules—still, if the Do-naught, he was so fiercely the Dread-naught—that they did not dare, despite the advantage of numbers, openly to brave and defy him. No one would bell the cat—and *such* a cat! They began to lay plots to get rid of him through the law. Nothing could be easier to such knowing adepts in guilt than to transfer to his charge any deed of violence one of their own gang had committed—heap damning circumstances round him—privily apprise justice—falsely swear away his life. In short, the man was in their way, as a wasp that has blundered into an ant's nest; and, while frightened at the size of the intruder, these honest ants were resolved to get him out of their citadel alive or dead. Probable it was that Jasper Losely would meet with his deserts at last for an offense of which he was innocent as a babe unborn.

It is at this juncture that we are readmitted to the presence of Arabella Crane.

She was standing by a window on the upper floor of a house situated in a narrow street. The blind was let down, but she had drawn it a little aside, and was looking out. By the fireside was seated a thin, vague, gnome-like figure, perched comfortless on the edge of a rush-bottomed chair, with its shadowy knees drawn up till they nearly touched its shadowy chin. There was something about the outline of this figure so indefinite and unsubstantial, that you might have taken it for an optical illusion, a spectral apparition on the point of vanishing. This thing was, however, possessed of voice, and was speaking in a low but distinct hissing whisper. As the whisper ended, Arabella Crane, without turning her face, spoke, also under her breath.

"You are sure that, so long as Losely draws this weekly stipend from the man whom he has in his power, he will persist in the same course of life. Can you not warn him of the danger?"

"Peach against pals! I dare not. No trusting him. He would come down, mad with brandy, make an infernal row, seize two or three by the throat, dash their heads against each other, blab, bully, and a knife would be out, and a weasand or two cut, and a carcass or so dropped into the Thames, mine certainly—his perhaps."

"You say you can keep back this plot against him for two or three days?"

"For two days—yes. I should be glad to save General Jas. He has the bones of a fine fellow, and if he had not destroyed himself by brandy, he might have been at the top of the tree—in the profession. But he is fit for nothing now."

"Ah! and you say the brandy is killing him?"

"No, he will not be killed by brandy, if he continues to drink it among the same jolly set."

"And if he were left without the money to spend among these terrible companions, he would no longer resort to their meetings? You are right there. The same vanity that makes him pleased to be the great man in that society would make him shrink from coming among them as a beggar."

"And if he had not the wherewithal to pay the weekly subscription, there would be an excuse to shut the door in his face. All these fellows wish to do is to get rid of him; and if by fair means, there would be no necessity to resort to foul. The only danger would be that from which you have so often saved him. In despair would he not commit some violent, rash action—a street-robbery, or something of the kind? He has courage for any violence, but no longer the cool head to plan a scheme which would not be detected. You see I can prevent my pals joining in such risks as he may propose, or letting him (if he were to ask it) into any adventure of their own, for they know that I am a safe adviser; they respect me; the law has never been able to lay hold of *me;* and when I say to them, 'That fellow drinks, blabs, and boasts, and would bring us all into trouble,' they will have nothing to do with him; but I can not prevent his doing what he pleases out of his own muddled head, and with his own reckless hand."

"But you will keep in his confidence, and let me know all that he proposes?"

"Yes."

"And meanwhile he must come to me. And this time I have more hope than ever, since his health gives way, and he is weary of crime itself. Mr. Cutts, come near—softly. Look—nay, nay, he can not see you from below, and you are screened by the blind. Look, I say, where he sits."

She pointed to a room on the ground-floor in the opposite house, where might be dimly seen a dull, red fire in a sordid grate, and a man's form, the head pillowed upon arms that rested on a small table. On the table a glass, a bottle.

"It is thus that his mornings pass," said Arabella Crane, with a wild, bitter pity in the tone of her voice. "Look, I say, is he formidable now? *can* you fear him?"

"Very much indeed," muttered Cutts. "He is only stupefied, and he can shake off a doze as quickly as a bull-dog does when a rat is let into his kennel."

"Mr. Cutts, you tell me that he constantly carries about him the same old pocket-book which he says contains his fortune; in other words, the papers that frighten his victim into giving him the money which is now the cause of his danger. There is surely no pocket you can not pick or get picked, Mr. Cutts? Fifty pounds for that book in three hours."

"Fifty pounds are not enough; the man he sponges on would give more to have those papers in his power."

"Possibly; but Losely has not been dolt enough to trust you sufficiently to enable you to know how to commence negotiations. Even if the man's name and address be among those papers, you could not make use of the knowledge without bringing Jasper himself upon you; and even if Jasper were out of the way, you would not have the same hold over his victim: you know not the circumstances; you could make no story out of some incoherent rambling letters; and the man, who, I can tell you, is by nature a bully, and strong, compared with any other man but Jasper, would seize you by the collar; and you would be lucky if you got out of his house with no other loss than the letters, and no other gain but a broken bone. Pooh! you know all that, or you would have stolen the book, and made use of it before. Fifty pounds for that book in three hours; and if Jasper Losely be safe and alive six months hence, fifty pounds more, Mr. Cutts. See! he stirs not—he must be fast asleep. Now is the moment."

"What, in his own room!" said Cutts, with contempt. "Why, he would know who did it; and where should I be to-morrow? No—in the streets; any one has a right to pick a pocket in the Queen's highways. In three hours you shall have the book."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mercury is the Patron Deity of Mercantile Speculators, as well as of crack-brained Poets; indeed, he is much more favorable, more a friend at a pinch, to the former class of his protégés than he is to the latter.

"Poolum per hostes Mercurius celer
Denso paventem sustulit aere."

Poole was sitting with his wife after dinner. He had made a good speculation that day; little

Johnny would be all the better for it a few years hence, and some other man's little Johnnys all the worse—but each for himself in this world! Poole was therefore basking in the light of his gentle helpmate's approving smile. He had taken an extra glass of a venerable port-wine, which had passed to his cellar from the bins of Uncle Sam. Commercial prosperity without, conjugal felicity within, the walls of Alhambra Villa; surely Adolphus Poole is an enviable man! Does he look so? The ghost of what he was but a few months ago! His cheeks have fallen in; his clothes hang on him like bags; there is a worried, haggard look in his eyes, a nervous twitch in his lips, and every now and then he looks at the handsome Parisian clock on the chimney-piece, and then shifts his posture, snubs his connubial angel, who asks "what ails him?" refills his glass, and stares on the fire, seeing strange shapes in the mobile aspects of the coals.

To-morrow brings back this weekly spectre! To-morrow Jasper Losely, punctual to the stroke of eleven, returns to remind him of that past which, if revealed, will blast the future. And revealed it might be any hour, despite the bribe for silence which he must pay with his own hands, under his own roof. Would he trust another with the secret of that payment?—horror! Would he visit Losely at his own lodging, and pay him there?—murder! Would he appoint him somewhere in the streets—run the chance of being seen with such a friend? Respectability confabulating with offal!—disgrace! And Jasper had on the last two or three visits been peculiarly disagreeable. He had talked loud. Poole feared that his wife might have her ear at the keyhole. Jasper had seen the parlor-maid in the passage as he went out and caught her round the waist. The parlor-maid had complained to Mrs. Poole, and said she should leave if so insulted by such an ugly blackguard. Fancy! what the poor lady-killer has come to! Mrs. Poole had grown more and more inquisitive and troublesome on the subject of such extraordinary visits; and now, as her husband stirred the fire—having roused her secret ire by his previous unmanly snubbings, and Mrs. Poole being one of those incomparable wives who have a perfect command of temper, who never reply to angry words at the moment, and who always, with exquisite calm and self-possession, pay off every angry word by an amiable sting at a right moment—Mrs. Poole, I say, thus softly said:

"Sammy, duck, we know what makes oo so cross; but it sha'n't vex oo long, Sammy. That dreadful man comes to-morrow. He always comes the same day of the week."

"Hold your tongue, Mrs. Poole."

"Yes, Sammy dear, I'll hold my tongue. But Sammy sha'n't be imposed upon by mendicants; for I know he is a mendicant—one of those sharpers or black-legs who took oo in, poor innocent Sam, in oo wild bachelor days, and oo good heart can't bear to see him in distress; but there must be an end to all things."

"Mrs. Poole—Mrs. Poole—will you stop your fool's jaw or not?"

"My poor dear hubby," said the angel, squeezing out a mild tear, "oo will be in good hands to advise oo; for I've been and told Pa!"

"You have," faltered Poole, "told your father—you have!" and the expression of his face became so ghastly that Mrs. Poole grew seriously terrified. She had long felt that there was something very suspicious in her husband's submission to the insolence of so rude a visitor. But she knew that he was not brave; the man might intimidate him by threats of personal violence. The man might probably be some poor relation, or some one whom Poole had ruined, either in by-gone discreditable sporting days, or in recent respectable mercantile speculations. But at that ghastly look a glimpse of the real truth broke upon her; and she stood speechless and appalled. At this moment there was a loud ring at the street-door bell. Poole gathered himself up, and staggered out of the room into the passage.

His wife remained without motion: for the first time she conceived a fear of her husband. Presently she heard a harsh female voice in the hall, and then a joyous exclamation from Poole himself. Recovered by these unexpected sounds, she went mechanically forth into the passage, just in time to see the hems of a dark iron-gray dress disappearing within Poole's study, while Poole, who had opened the study door, and was bowing in the iron-gray dress obsequiously, turned his eye toward his wife, and striding toward her for a moment, whispered—"Go up stairs, and stir not," in a tone so unlike his usual gruff accents of command, that it cowed her out of the profound contempt with which she habitually received, while smilingly obeying, his marital authority.

Poole, vanishing into his study, carefully closed his door, and would have caught his lady visitor by both her hands; but she waved him back, and, declining a seat, remained sternly erect.

"Mr. Poole, I have but a few words to say. The letters which gave Jasper Losely the power to extort money from you are no longer in his possession; they are in mine. You need fear him no more—you will fee him no more."

"Oh!" cried Poole, falling on his knees, "the blessing of a father of a family—a babe not six weeks born—be on your blessed, blessed head!"

"Get up, and don't talk nonsense. I do not give you these papers at present, nor burn them. Instead of being in the power of a muddled, irresolute drunkard, you are in the power of a vigilant, clear-brained woman. You are in my power, and you will act as I tell you."

"You can ask nothing wrong, I am sure," said Poole, his grateful enthusiasm much abated. "Command me; but the papers can be of no use to you; I will pay for them handsomely."

"Be silent and listen. I retain these papers—first, because Jasper Losely must not know that they ever passed to my hands; secondly, because you must inflict no injury on Losely himself. Betray me to him, or try to render himself up to the law, and the documents will be used against you ruthlessly. Obey, and you have nothing to fear, and nothing to pay. When Jasper Losely calls on you to-morrow, ask him to show you the letters. He can not; he will make excuses. Decline peremptorily, but not insultingly (his temper is fierce), to pay him farther. He will perhaps charge you with having hired some one to purloin his pocket-book; let him think it. Stop—your window

here opens on the ground; a garden without:—Ah! have three of the police in that garden, in sight of the window. Point to them if he threaten you; summon them to your aid, or pass out to them, if he actually attempt violence. But when he has left the house, you must urge no charge against him; he must be let off unscathed. You can be at no loss for excuse in this mercy: a friend of former times—needy, unfortunate, whom habits of drink maddened for the moment—necessary to eject him, inhuman to prosecute—any story you please. The next day you can, if you choose, leave London for a short time; I advise it. But his teeth will be drawn; he will most probably never trouble you again. I know his character. There, I have done; open the door, Sir."

CHAPTER IX.

The wreck and the life-boat in a fog.

The next day, a little after noon, Jasper Losely, coming back from Alhambra Villa—furious, desperate, knowing not where to turn for bread, or on whom to pour his rage—beheld suddenly, in a quiet, half-built street, which led from the suburb to the New Road, Arabella Crane standing right in his path. She had emerged from one of the many straight intersecting roads which characterize that crude nebula of a future city: and the woman and the man met thus face to face; not another passer-by visible in the thoroughfare; at a distance the dozing hack cab-stand; round and about them carcasses of brick and mortar—some with gaunt scaffolding fixed into their ribs, and all looking yet more weird in their raw struggle into shape through the livid haze of a yellow fog.

Losely, seeing Arabella thus planted in his way, recoiled; and the superstition in which he had long associated her image with baffled schemes and perilous hours, sent the wrathful blood back through his veins so quickly that he heard his heart beat!

Mrs. Crane. "So! You see we can not help meeting, Jasper dear, do what you will to shun me."

Losely. "I—I—you always startle me so!—you are in town, then?—to stay?—your old quarters?"

Mrs. Crane. "Why ask? You can not wish to know where I am—you would not call. But how fares it?—what do you do?—how do you live? You look ill—Poor Jasper!"

Losely (fiercely). "Hang your pity, and give me some money."

Mrs. Crane (calmly laying her lean hand on the arm which was darted forward more in menace than entreaty, and actually terrifying the Gladiator as she linked that deadly arm into her own). "I said you would always find me when at the worst of your troubles. And so, Jasper, it shall be till this right hand of yours is powerless as the clay at our feet. Walk—walk; you are not afraid of me?—walk on, tell me all. Where have you just been?"

Jasper, therewith reminded of his wrongs, poured out a volley of abuse on Poole, communicating to Mrs. Crane the whole story of his claims on that gentleman—the loss of the pocket-book filched from him, and Poole's knowledge that he was thus disarmed.

"And the coward," said he, grinding his teeth, "got out of his window—and three policemen in his garden. He must have bribed a pickpocket—low knave that he is. But I shall find out—and then—"

"And then, Jasper, how will you be better off?—the letters are gone: and Poole has you in his power if you threaten him again. Now, hark you; you did not murder the Italian who was found stabbed in the fields yonder a week ago? £100 reward for the murderer."

"I—no. How coldly you ask! I have hit hard in fair fight—murdered, never. If ever I take to that, I shall begin with Poole."

"But I tell you, Jasper, that you are suspected of that murder; that you will be accused of that murder; and if I had not thus fortunately met you, for that murder you would be tried and hanged."

"Are you serious? Who could accuse me?"

"Those who know that you are not guilty—those who could make you appear so—the villains with whom you horde, and drink, and brawl! Have I ever been wrong in my warnings yet?"

"This is too horrible," faltered Losely, thinking not of the conspiracy against his life but of her prescience in detecting it. "It must be witchcraft, and nothing else. How could you learn what you tell me?"

"That is my affair; enough for you that I am right. Go no more to those black haunts: they are even now full of snares and pitfalls for you. Leave London, and you are safe. Trust to me."

"And where shall I go?"

"Look you, Jasper; you have worn out this Old World—no refuge for you but the New. Whither went your father, thither go you. Consent, and you shall not want. You can not discover Sophy. You have failed in all attempts on Darrell's purse. But agree to sail to Australasia, and I will engage to you an income larger than you say you extorted from Poole, to be spent in those safer shores."

"And you will go with me, I suppose," said Losely, with ungracious sullenness.

"Go with you, as you please. Be where you are—yes."

The ruffian bounded with rage and loathing.

"Woman, cross me no more, or I shall be goaded into—"

"Into killing me—you dare not! Meet my eye if you can—you dare not! Harm me, yea a hair of my head, and your moments are numbered—your doom sealed! Be we two together in a desert—not a human eye to see the deed—not a human ear to receive my groan, and still I should stand by your side unharmed. I, who have returned the wrongs received from you by vigilant, untiring benefits—I, who have saved you from so many enemies and so many dangers—I, who, now when all the rest of earth shun you, when all other resource fails—I, who now say to you, 'Share my income, but be honest!'—*I* receive injury from that hand! No; the guilt would be too unnatural—Heaven would not permit it. Try, and your arm will fall palsied by your side!"

Jasper's bloodshot eyes dropped beneath the woman's fixed and scorching gaze, and his lips, white and tremulous, refused to breathe the fierce curse into which his brutal nature concentrated its fears and its hate. He walked on in gloomy silence; but some words she had let fall suggested a last resort to his own daring.

She had urged him to quit the Old World for the New, but that had been the very proposition conveyed to him from Darrell. If that proposition, so repugnant to the indolence that had grown over him, must be embraced, better, at least, sail forth alone, his own master, than be the dependent slave of this abhorred and persecuting benefactress. His despair gave him the determination he had hitherto lacked. He would seek Darrell himself, and make the best compromise he could. This resolve passed into his mind as he stalked on through the yellow fog, and his nerves recovered from their irritation, and his thoughts regained something of their ancient craft, as the idea of escaping from Mrs. Crane's vigilance and charity assumed a definite shape.

"Well," said he, at length, dissimulating his repugnance, and with an effort at his old half-coaxing, half-rollicking tones, "you certainly are the best of creatures; and, as you say,

> 'Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
> I ne'er could injure you,'

ungrateful dog though I must seem, and very likely am. I own I have a horror of Australia—such a long sea-voyage! New scenes no longer attract me; I am no longer young, though I ought to be; but, if you insist on it, and will really condescend to accompany me, in spite of all my sins to you, why, I can make up my mind. And as to honesty, ask those infernal rascals who, you say, would swear away my life, and they will tell you that I have been as innocent as a lamb since my return to England; and that is my guilt in their villainous eyes. As long as that infamous Poole gave me enough for my humble wants I was a reformed man. I wish to keep reformed. Very little suffices for me now. As you say, Australia may be the best place for me. When shall we sail?"

"Are you serious?"

"To be sure."

"Then I will inquire the days on which the vessels start. You can call on me at my own old home, and all shall be arranged. Oh, Jasper Losely, do not avoid this last chance of escape from the perils that gather round you."

"No; I am sick of life—of all things except repose. Arabella, I suffer horrible pain."

He groaned, for he spoke truly. At that moment the gnaw of the monster anguish, which fastens on the nerves like a wolf's tooth, was so keen that he longed to swell his groan into a roar. The old fable of Hercules in the poisoned tunic was surely invented by some skilled physiologist to denote the truth that it is only in the strongest frames that pain can be pushed into its extremest torture. The heart of the grim woman was instantly and thoroughly softened. She paused; she made him lean on her arm; she wiped the drops from his brow; she addressed him in the most soothing tones of pity. The spasm passed away suddenly, as it does in neuralgic agonies, and with it any gratitude or any remorse in the breast of the sufferer.

"Yes," he said, "I will call on you; but meanwhile I am without a farthing. Oh, do not fear that if you helped me now I should again shun you. I have no other resource left; nor have I now the spirit I once had. I no longer now laugh at fatigue and danger."

"But will you swear by all that you yet hold sacred—if, alas! there be aught which is sacred to you—that you will not again seek the company of those men who are conspiring to entrap you into the hangman's hands?"

"Seek them again, the ungrateful, cowardly blackguards! No, no; I promise you that—solemnly; it is medical aid that I want; it is rest, I tell you—rest, rest, rest."

Arabella Crane drew forth her purse. "Take what you will," said she, gently. Jasper, whether from the desire to deceive her, or because her alms were really so distasteful to his strange kind of pride that he stinted to bare necessity the appeal to them, contented himself with a third or a fourth of the sovereigns that the purse contained; and after a few words of thanks and promises he left her side, and soon vanished in the fog that grew darker and darker as the night-like wintery day deepened over the silenced thoroughfares.

The woman went her way through the mists, hopeful—through the mists went the man, hopeful also. Recruiting himself by slight food and strong drink at a tavern on his road, he stalked on to Darrell's house in Carlton Gardens; and, learning there that Darrell was at Fawley, hastened to the station from which started the train to the town nearest to the old Manor House; reached that town safely, and there rested for the night.

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

The secret which Guy Darrell did not confide to Alban Morley.

It was a serene noonday in that melancholy interlude of the seasons when autumn has really ceased—winter not yet visibly begun. The same hired vehicle which had borne Lionel to Fawley, more than five years ago, stopped at the gate of the wild, umbrageous grass-land that surrounded the antique Manor House. It had been engaged, from the nearest railway station on the London Road, by a lady, with a female companion who seemed her servant. The driver dismounted, opened the door of the vehicle, and the lady, bidding him wait there till her return, and saying a few words to her companion, descended, and drawing her cloak around her, walked on alone toward the Manor House. At first her step was firm, and her pace quick. She was still under the excitement of the resolve in which the journey from her home had been suddenly conceived and promptly accomplished. But as the path wound on through the stillness of venerable groves, her courage began to fail her. Her feet loitered, her eyes wandered round vaguely, timidly. The scene was not new to her. As she gazed, rushingly gathered over her sorrowful, shrinking mind memories of sportive, happy summer days, spent in childhood amidst those turfs and shades—memories, more agitating, of the last visit (childhood then ripened into blooming youth) to the ancient dwelling which, yet concealed from view by the swells of the undulating ground and the yellow boughs of the giant trees, betrayed its site by the smoke rising thin and dim against the limpid atmosphere. She bent down her head, closing her eyes as if to shut out less the face of the landscape than the images that rose, ghost-like, up to people it, and sighed heavily, heavily. Now—hard by, roused from its bed among the fern, the doe that Darrell had tamed into companionship had watched with curiosity this strange intruder on its solitary range. But at the sound of that heavy sigh, the creature, emboldened, left its halting-place, and stole close to the saddened woman, touching her very dress. Doubtless, as Darrell's companion in his most musing hours, the doe was familiarized to the sound of sighs, and associated the sound with its gentlest notions of humanity.

The lady, starting, raised her drooping lids, and met those soft dark eyes, dark and soft as her own. Round the animal's neck there was a simple collar, with a silver plate, fresh and new, evidently placed there recently; and as the creature thrust forward its head, as if for the caress of a wonted hand, the lady read the inscription. The words were in Italian, and may be construed thus: "Female, yet not faithless; fostered, yet not ungrateful." As she read, her heart so swelled, and her resolve so deserted her, that she turned as if she had received a sentence of dismissal, and went back some hasty paces. The doe followed her till she paused again, and then it went slowly down a narrow path to the left, which led to the banks of the little lake.

The lady had now recovered herself. "It is a duty, and it must be done," she muttered; and letting down the vail she had raised on entering the demesne, she hurried on, not retracing her steps in the same path, but taking that into which the doe had stricken—perhaps in the confused mistake of a mind absorbed and absent—perhaps in revived recollection of the localities; for the way thus to the house was shorter than by the weed-grown carriage-road. The lake came in view, serene and glassy; half leafless woodlands reflected far upon its quiet waters; the doe halted, lifted its head and sniffed the air, and, somewhat quickening its pace, vanished behind one of the hillocks clothed with brushwood, that gave so primitive and forest-like a character to the old ground. Advancing still, there now, at her right hand, grew out of the landscape the noble turrets of the unfinished pile; and, close at her left, under a gnarled fantastic thorn-tree, the still lake at his feet reflecting his stiller shadow, reclined Guy Darrell, the doe nestled at his side.

So unexpected this sight—he, whom she came to seek yet feared to see, so close upon her way—the lady uttered a faint but sharp cry, and Darrell sprang to his feet. She stood before him, vailed, mantled, bending as a suppliant.

"Avaunt!" he faltered, wildly. "Is this a spirit my own black solitude conjures up—or is it a delusion, a dream?"

"It is I—I!—the Caroline dear to you once, if detested now! Forgive me! Not for myself I come." She flung back her vail—her eyes pleadingly sought his.

"So," said Darrell, gathering his arms round his breast in the gesture peculiar to him when seeking either to calm a more turbulent movement, or to confirm a sterner resolution of his heart—"so! Caroline, Marchioness of Montfort, we are then fated to meet face to face at last! I understand—Lionel Haughton sent, or showed to you, my letter?"

"Oh, Mr. Darrell! how could you have the heart to write in such terms of one who—"

"One who had taken the heart from my bosom and trampled it into the mire. True, fribbles will say, 'Fie! the vocabulary of fine gentlemen has no harsh terms for women.' Gallants, to whom love is pastime, leave or are left with elegant sorrow and courtly bows. Madam, I was never such airy gallant. I am but a man, unhappily in earnest—a man who placed in those hands his life of life—who said to you, while yet in his prime, 'There is my future—take it, till it vanish out of earth!' You have made that life substanceless as a ghost—that future barren as the grave. And when you dare force yourself again upon my way, and would dictate laws

to my very hearth—when I speak as a man what plain men must feel—'Oh, Mr. Darrell!' says your injured ladyship, 'how can you have the heart?' Woman! were you not false as the falsest? Falsehood has no dignity to awe rebuke—falsehood no privilege of sex."

"Darrell — Darrell — Darrell — spare me, spare me! I have been so punished—I am so miserable!"

"You!—punished!—What! you sold yourself to youth, and sleek looks, and grand titles, and the flattery of a world; and your rose-leaves were crumpled in the gorgeous marriage-bed. Adequate punishment!—a crumpled rose-leaf! True, the man was a— But why should I speak ill of him? It was he who was punished, if, accepting his rank, you recognized in himself a nothingness that you could neither love nor honor. False and ungrateful alike to the man you chose—to the man you forsook! And now you have buried one, and you have schemed to degrade the other."

"Degrade!—Oh, it is that charge which has stung me to the quick! All the others I deserve. But *that* charge! Listen—you shall listen!"

"I stand here resigned to do so. Say all you will now, for it is the last time on earth I lend my ears to your voice."

"Be it so—the last time." She paused to recover speech, collect thoughts, gain strength; and strange though it may seem to those who have never loved, amidst all her grief and humiliation, there was a fearful delight in that presence from which she had been exiled since her youth—nay, delight unaccountable to herself, even in that rough, vehement, bitter tempest of reproach; for an instinct told her that there would have been no hatred in the language had no love been lingering in the soul.

"Speak," said Darrell, gently softened, despite himself, by her evident struggle to control emotion.

Twice she began—twice voice failed her. At last her words came forth audibly. She began with her plea for Lionel and Sophy, and gathered boldness by her zeal on their behalf. She proceeded to vindicate her own motives—to acquit herself of his harsh charge. She scheme for his degradation! She had been too carried away by her desire to promote his happiness—to guard him from the possibility of a self-reproach. At first he listened to her with a haughty calmness, merely saying, in reference to Sophy and Lionel, "I have nothing to add or to alter in the resolution I have communicated to Lionel." But when she thus insensibly mingled their cause with her own, his impatience broke out. "My happiness! Oh, well have you proved the sincerity with which you schemed for *that!* Save me from self-reproach!—me! Has Lady Montfort so wholly forgotten that she was once Caroline Lyndsay that she can assume the part of a warning angel against the terrors of self-reproach?"

"Ah!" she murmured, faintly, "can you suppose, however fickle and thankless I may seem to you—"

"Seem!" he repeated.

"Seem!" she said again, but meekly—"seem, and seem justly; yet can you suppose that when I became free to utter my remorse—to speak of gratitude, of reverence—I was insincere? Darrell, Darrell, you can not think so! That letter which reached you abroad nearly a year ago, in which I laid my pride of woman at your feet, as I lay it now in coming here—that letter, in which I asked if it were impossible for you to pardon, too late for me to atone—was written on my knees. It was the outburst of my very heart. Nay, nay, hear me out. Do not imagine that I would again obtrude a hope so contemptuously crushed!" (A deep blush came over her cheek.) "I blame you not, nor, let me say it, did your severity bring that shame which I might have justly felt had I so written to any man on earth but you—you, so reverenced from my infancy, that—"

"Ay," interrupted Darrell, fiercely, "ay, do not fear that I should misconceive you; you would not so have addressed the young, the fair, the happy. No! you, proud beauty, with hosts, no doubt, of supplicating wooers, would have thrust that hand into the flames before it wrote to a young man, loved as the young are loved, what without shame it wrote to the old man, reverenced as the old are *revereneed!* But my heart is not old, and your boasted reverence was a mocking insult. Your letter, torn to pieces, was returned to you without a word—insult for insult! You felt no shame that I should so rudely reject your pity. Why should you? Rejected pity is not rejected love. The man was not less old because he was not reconciled to age."

This construction of her tender penitence—this explanation of his bitter scorn—took Caroline Montfort wholly by surprise. From what writhing agonies of lacerated self-love came that pride which was but self-depreciation? It was a glimpse into the deeper rents of his charred and desolated being, which increased at once her yearning affection and her passionate despair. Vainly she tried to utter the feelings that crowded upon her!—vainly, vainly! Woman can murmur, "I have injured you—forgive!" when she can not exclaim, "You disdain me, but I love!" Vainly, vainly her bosom heaved and her lips moved under the awe of his flashing eyes and the grandeur of his indignant frown.

"Ah!" he resumed, pursuing his own thoughts with a sombre intensity of passion that rendered him almost unconscious of her presence—"Ah! I said to myself, 'Oh, she believes that she has been so mourned and missed that my soul would spring back to her false smile; that I could be so base a slave to my senses as to pardon the traitress because her face was fair enough to haunt my dreams. She dupes herself; she is no necessity to my existence—I have wrenched it from her power years, long years ago! I will show her, since again she deigns to remember me, that I am not so old as to be grateful for the leavings of a heart. I will love another—I will be beloved. She shall not say with secret triumph, 'The old man dotes in rejecting me.'"

"Darrell, Darrell—unjust—cruel; kill me rather than talk thus!"

He heeded not her cry. His words rolled on in that wonderful, varying music which, whether in tenderness or in wrath, gave to his voice a magical power—fascinating, hushing, overmastering human souls.

"But—you have the triumph; see, I am still alone! I sought the world of the young—the marriage mart of the Beautiful once more. Alas! if my eye was captured for a moment, it was by something that reminded me of you. I saw a faultless face, radiant with its virgin blush; moved to it. I drew near—sighing, turned away; it was not you! I heard the silvery laugh of a life fresh as an April morn. 'Hark!' I said. 'is not that the sweet mirth-note at which all my cares were dispelled?' Listening, I forgot my weight of years. Why! because listening, I remembered you. 'Heed not the treacherous blush and the beguiling laugh,' whispered Prudence. 'Seek in congenial mind a calm companion to thine own.' Mind!—oh frigid pedantry! Mind!—had not yours been a volume open to my eyes, in every page, methought, some lovely poet-truth never revealed to human sense before! No; you had killed to me all womanhood! Woo another!—wed another! 'Hush,' I said, 'it *shall* be. Eighteen years since we parted—seeing her not, she remains eternally the same! Seeing her again, the very change that time must have brought will cure.' I saw you—all the Past rushed back in that stolen moment. I fled—never more to dream that I can shake off the curse of memory—blent with each drop of my blood—woven with each tissue—throbbing in each nerve—bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—poison-root from which every thought buds to wither—the curse to have loved and to have trusted you!"

"Merciful Heaven! can I bear this?" cried Caroline, clasping her hands to her bosom. "And is my sin so great—is it so unpardonable! Oh, if in a heart so noble, in a nature so great, mine was the unspeakable honor to inspire an affection thus enduring, must it be only—only as a curse! Why can I not repair the past? You have not ceased to love me. Call it hate—it is love still! And now, no barrier between our lives, can I never, never again—never, now that I know I am less unworthy of you by the very anguish I feel to have so stung you—can I never again be the Caroline of old!"

"Ha, ha!" burst forth the unrelenting man, with a bitter laugh!—"see the real coarseness of a woman's nature under all its fine-spun frippery! Behold these delicate creatures, that we scarcely dare to woo! how little they even comprehend the idolatry they inspire! The Caroline of old! Lo, the virgin whose hand we touched with knightly homage, whose first bashful kiss was hallowed as the gale of paradise, deserts us—sells herself at the altar—sanctifies there her very infidelity to us; and when years have passed, and a death has restored her freedom, she comes to us as if she had never pillowed her head on another's bosom, and says, 'Can I not again be the Caroline of old!' We men are too rude to forgive the faithless. Where is the Caroline I loved? *You*—are—my Lady Montfort! Look round. On these turfs you, then a child, played beside my children. They are dead, but less dead to me than you. Never dreamed I then that a creature so fair would be other than a child to my grave and matured existence. Then, if I glanced toward your future, I felt no pang to picture you grown to womanhood—another's bride. My hearth had for years been widowed. I had no thought of second nuptials. My son would grow up to enjoy my wealth, and realize my cherished dreams—he was snatched from me! Who alone had the power to comfort?—who alone had the courage to steal into the darkened room where I sate mourning? sure that in her voice there would be consolation, and the sight of her sympathizing tears would chide away the bitterness of mine?—who but the Caroline of old! Ah, you are weeping now. But Lady Montfort's tears have no talisman to me! You were then still a child—as a child, my soothing angel—A year or so more, my daughter, to whom all my pride of House—all my hope of race, had been consigned—she whose happiness I valued so much more than my ambition, that I had refused her hand to your young Lord of Montfort—puppet that, stripped of the millinery of titles, was not worthy to replace a doll!—my daughter, I folded her one night in my arms—I implored her to confide in me if ever she nursed a hope that I could further—knew a grief that I could banish; and she promised—and she bent her forehead to my blessing—and before daybreak she had fled with a man whose very touch was dishonor and pollution, and was lost to me forever. . . . . Then, when I came hither to vent at my father's grave the indignant grief I suffered not the world to see, you and your mother (she who professed for me such loyal friendship, such ineffaceable gratitude), you two came kindly to share my solitude—and then, then you were a child no more!—and a sun that had never gilt my life, brightened out of the face of the Caroline of old!" He paused a moment, heeding not her bitter weeping; he was rapt from the present hour itself by the excess of that anguish which is to woe what ecstasy is to joy—swept along by the flood of thoughts that had been pent within his breast through the solitary days and haunted nights, which had made the long transition-state from his manhood's noon to its gathering eve. And in that pause there came from afar off a melodious, melancholy strain—softly, softly borne over the cold blue waters—softly, softly through the sere autumnal leaves—the music of the magic flute!

"Hark!" he said, "do you not remember? Look to that beech-tree yonder! Summer clothed it then! Do you not remember! as under that tree we stood—that same, same note came, musical as now, undulating with rise and fall—came, as if to interpret, by a voice from fairy-land, the beatings of my own mysterious heart. You had been pleading for pardon to one less ungrateful—less perfidious—than my comforter proved herself. I had listened to you, wondering why anger and wrong seemed banished from the world; and I murmured, in answer, without conscious thought of myself, 'Happy the man whose faults your bright charity will admonish—whose griefs your tenderness will chase away! But when, years hence, children are born to yourself, spare me the one who shall most resemble you, to replace the daughter whom I can only sincerely pardon when something else can spring up to my desolate being—something that I can cherish without the memory of falsehood and the dread of shame.' Yes, as I ceased, came that music; and as it thrilled through the summer air, I turned and met your eyes—turned and saw your blush—

turned and heard some faint faltering words drowning the music with diviner sweetness; and suddenly I knew as by a revelation, that the Child I had fostered had grown the Woman whom I loved.—My own soul was laid bare to me by the flash of hope. Over the universe rushed light and color! Oh, the Caroline of old! What wonder that she became so fatally, so unspeakably beloved! As some man in ancient story, banished from his native land, is told by an oracle to seek a happier isle in undiscovered seas—freights with his all a single bark—collects on his wandering altar the last embers of his abandoned hearth—places beside it his exiled household gods; so all that my life had left to me, hallowing and hallowed, I stored in you. . . . . I tore myself from the old native soil, the old hardy skies. Through Time's wide ocean I saw but the promised golden isle. Fables, fables!—lying oracle!—sunken vessel!—visionary isle! And life to me had till then been so utterly without love!—had passed in such arid labors—without a holiday of romance—all the fountains of the unknown passion sealed till the spell struck the rock, and every wave, every drop sparkled fresh to a single star. Yet my boyhood, like other men's, had dreamed of its Ideal. There at last that Ideal, come to life, bloomed before me; there, under those beech-trees, the Caroline of old. Oh wretched woman, now weeping at my side, well may you weep! Never can earth give you back such love as you lost in mine."

"I know it, I know it—fool that I was—miserable fool!"

"Ay, but comfort yourself—wilder and sadder folly in myself! Your mother was right. 'The vain child,' she said, 'knows not her own heart. She is new to the world—has seen none of her own years. For your sake, as for hers, I must insist on the experiment of absence. A year's ordeal—see if she is then of the same mind.' I marveled at her coldness; proudly I submitted to her reasonings; fearlessly I confided the result to you. Ah! how radiant was your smile, when, in the parting hour, I said, 'Summer and you will return again!' In vain, on pretense that the experiment should be complete, did your mother carry you abroad, and exact from us both the solemn promise that not even a letter should pass between us—that our troth, made thus conditional, should be a secret to all—in vain, if meant to torture me with doubt. In my creed, a doubt is itself a treason. How lovely grew the stern face of Ambition!—how Fame seemed as a messenger from me to you! In the sound of applause I said, 'They can not shut out the air that will carry that sound to her ears! All that I can win from Honor shall be my marriage-gifts to my queenly bride.' See that arrested pile—begun at my son's birth, stopped a while at his death, recommenced on a statelier plan when I thought of your footstep on its floors—your shadow on its walls. Stopped now for ever! Architects can build a palace; can they build a home? But you—you—you, all the while—your smile on another's suit—your thoughts on another's hearth!"

"Not so!—not so! Your image never forsook me. I was giddy, thoughtless, dazzled, entangled; and I told you in the letter you returned to me—told you that I had been deceived!"

"Patience—patience! Deceived! Do you imagine that I do not see all that passed as in a magician's glass? Caroline Montfort, you never loved me; you never knew what love was. Thrown suddenly into the gay world, intoxicated by the effect of your own beauty, my sombre figure gradually faded dim—pale ghost indeed in the atmosphere of flowers and lustres, rank with the breath of flatterers. Then came my lord the Marquis—a cousin, privileged to familiar intimacy, to visit at will, to ride with you, dance with you, sit side by side with you, in quiet corners of thronging ball-rooms, to call you 'Caroline.' Tut, tut—ye are only cousins, and cousins are as brothers and sisters in the affectionate House of Vipont; and gossips talk, and young ladies envy—finest match in all England is the pretty-faced lord of Montfort! And your mother, who had said, 'Wait a year' to Guy Darrell, must have dreamed of the cousin, and schemed for his coronet, when she said it. And I was unseen, and I must not write; and the absent are always in the wrong—when cousins are present! And I hear your mother speak of me—hear the soft sound of her damaging praises. 'Another long speech from your clever admirer! Don't fancy he frets; that kind of man thinks of nothing but blue-books and politics.' And your cousin proposes, and you say with a sigh, 'No: I am bound to Guy Darrell;' and your mother says to my Lord, 'Wait, and still come—as a cousin!' And then, day by day, the sweet Mrs. Lyndsay drops into your ear the hints that shall poison your heart. Some fable is dressed to malign me; and you cry, ''Tis not true; prove it true, or I still keep my faith to Guy Darrell.' Then comes the kind compact—'If the story be false, my cousin must go;' 'and if it be true, you will be my own duteous child. Alas! your poor cousin is breaking his heart. A lawyer of forty has a heart made of parchment!' Aha! you were entangled, and of course deceived! Your letter did not explain what was the tale told to you. I care not a rush what it was. It is enough for me to know that if you had loved me you would have loved me the more for every tale that belied me. So the tale was credited, because a relief to credit it. So the compact was kept—so the whole bargain hurried over in elegant privacy—place of barter an embassador's chapel. Bauble for bauble—a jilt's faith for a mannikin's coronet. Four days before the year of trial expired, 'Only four days more!' I exclaimed, drunk with rapture. The journals lie before me. Three columns to Guy Darrell's speech last night; a column more to its effect on a senate, on an empire; and two lines—two little lines—to the sentence that struck Guy Darrell out of the world of men! 'Marriage in high life.—Marquis of Montfort—Caroline Lyndsay.' And the sun did not fall from heaven! Vulgarest of ends to the tritest of romances! In the gay world these things happen every day. Young ladies are privileged to give hopes to one man—their hands to another. 'Is the sin so unpardonable?' you ask with ingenuous simplicity. Lady Montfort, that depends! Reflect! What was my life before I put it into your keeping? Barren of happiness, I grant—

addened, solitary—to myself a thing of small alue? But what was that life to others?—a hing full of warm beneficence, of active uses, f hardy powers fitted to noble ends! In para-yzing that life as it was to others, there may be in wider and darker than the mere infidelity o love. And now do you dare to ask, 'Can I gain be the Caroline of old?'"

"I ask nothing—not even pardon," said the niserable woman. "I might say something to how where you misjudge me—something that night palliate; but no, let it be." Her accents vere so drearily hopeless that Darrell abruptly vithdrew his eyes from her face, as if fearful hat the sight of her woe might weaken his esolve. She had turned mechanically back. They walked on in gloomy silence side by ide, away now from the lake, back under the barbed thorn-tree—back by the moss-grown rag—back by the hollow trunks, and over the allen leaves of trees that had defied the torms of centuries, to drop, perhaps, brittle nd sapless, some quiet day when every wind is ulled.

The flute had ceased its music; the air had rown cold and piercing; the little park was oon traversed; the gate came in sight, and the umble vehicle without it. Then, involuntarily, oth stopped; and on each there came at once he consciousness that they were about to part—art, never perhaps in this world to meet again; nd, with all that had been said, so much un-poken—their hearts so full of what, alas! their ips could not speak.

"Lady Montfort," at length said Darrell.

At the sound of her name she shivered.

"I have addressed you rudely—harshly—"

"No—no—"

"But that was the last exercise of a right vhich I now resign forever. I spoke to her who ad once been Caroline Lyndsay; some gentler vords are due to the widow of Lord Montfort. Whatever the wrongs you have inflicted on me —wrongs inexpiable—I recognize no less in your general nature qualities that would render ou, to one whom you really loved and had ever deceived, the blessing I had once hoped ou would prove to me."

She shook her head impatiently, piteously.

"I know that in an ill-assorted union, and midst all the temptations to which flattered eauty is exposed, your conduct has been with-ut reproach. Forget the old man whose thoughts hould now be on his grave."

"Hush, hush—have human mercy!"

"I withdraw and repent my injustice to your notives in the protection you have given to the oor girl whom Lionel would wed; I thank you or that protection—though I refuse consent to ny kinsman's prayer. Whatever her birth, I nust be glad to know that she whom Lionel so oves is safe from a wretch like Losely. More —one word more—wait—it is hard for me to ay it—Be happy—I can not pardon, but I *can* less you. Farewell forever!"

More overpoweringly crushed by his tender-ess than his wrath, before Caroline could re-over the vehemence of her sobs he had ceased —he was gone—lost in the close gloom of a neighboring thicket, his hurried headlong path betrayed by the rustle of mournful boughs swing-ng back with their withered leaves.

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECT.

There is a place at which three roads meet, sacred to that mysterious goddess called Diana on earth, Luna (or the Moon) in heaven, and Hecate in the infernal regions. At this place pause the Virgins permitted to take their choice of the three roads. Few give their preference to that which is vowed to the goddess in her name of Diana: that road, cold and barren, is clothed by no roses and myrtles. Roses and myrtles vail the entrance to both the others, and in both the others Hymen has much the same gay-looking temples. But which of those two leads to the celestial Luna, or which of them conducts to the infernal Hecate, not one nymph in fifty divines. If thy heart should misgive thee, O nymph!—if, though cloud vail the path to the Moon, and sunshine gild that to pale Hecate—thine instinct recoils from the sunshine, while thou darest not adventure the cloud—thou hast still a choice left—thou hast still the safe road of Diana. Hecate, O nymph! is the goddess of ghosts. If thou takest *her* path look not back, for the ghosts are behind thee.

When we slowly recover from the tumult and passion of some violent distress a peculiar stillness falls upon the mind, and the atmosphere around it becomes, in that stillness, appallingly clear. We knew not, while wrestling with our woe, the extent of its ravages. As a land the day after a flood, as a field the day after a battle, is the sight of our own sorrow, when we no longer have to stem its raging, but to endure the destruction it has made. Distinct before Caroline Montfort's vision stretched the waste of her misery—the Past, the Present, the Future—all seemed to blend in one single Desolation. A strange thing it is how all time will converge itself, as it were, into the burning-glass of a moment! There runs a popular superstition that it is thus in the instant of death; that our whole existence crowds itself on the glazing eye—a panorama of all we have done on earth—just as the soul restores to the earth its garment. Certes, there are hours in our being, long before the last and dreaded one, when this phenomenon comes to warn us that, if memory were always active, time would be never gone. Rose before this woman—who, whatever the justice of Darrell's bitter reproaches, had a nature lovely enough to justify his anguish at her loss—the image of herself at that turning-point of life, when the morning mists are dimmed on our way, yet when a path chosen is a fate decided. Yes; she had excuses, not urged to the judge who sentenced, nor estimated to their full extent by the stern equity with which, amidst suffering and wrath, he had desired to weigh her cause.

Caroline's mother, Mrs. Lyndsay, was one of those parents who acquire an extraordinary influence over their children, by the union of caressing manners with obstinate resolves. She never lost control of her temper nor hold on her object. A slight, delicate, languid creature too, who would be sure to go into a consumption if unkindly crossed. With much strong common sense, much knowledge of human nature, egotistical, worldly, scheming, heartless, but withal so pleasing, so gentle, so bewitchingly despotic, that it was like living with an electro-biologist, who unnerves you by a look to knock you down with a feather. In only one great purpose of her life had Mrs. Lyndsay failed. When Darrell, rich by the rewards of his profession and the bequest of his namesake, had entered Parliament, and risen into that repute which con-

fers solid and brilliant station, Mrs. Lyndsay conceived the idea of appropriating to herself his honors and his wealth by a second Hymen. Having so long been domesticated in his house during the life of Mrs. Darrell, an intimacy as of near relations had been established between them. Her soft manners attached to her his children; and after Mrs. Darrell's death rendered it necessary that she should find a home of her own, she had an excuse, in Matilda's affection for her and for Caroline, to be more frequently before Darrell's eyes, and consulted by him yet more frequently than when actually a resident in his house. To her Darrell confided the proposal which had been made to him by the old Marchioness of Montfort, for an alliance between her young grandson and his sole surviving child. Wealthy as was the House of Vipont, it was among its traditional maxims that wealth wastes if not perpetually recruited. Every third generation, at farthest, it was the duty of that House to marry an heiress. Darrell's daughter, just seventeen, not yet brought out, would be an heiress, if he pleased to make her so, second to none whom the research of the Marchioness had detected within the drawing-rooms and nurseries of the three kingdoms. The proposal of the venerable peeress was at first very naturally gratifying to Darrell. It was an euthanasia for the old knightly race to die into a House that was an institution in the empire, and revive, phenix-like, in a line of peers, who might perpetuate the name of the heiress whose quarterings they would annex to their own, and sign themselves "Darrell Montfort." Said Darrell inly, "On the whole, such a marriage would have pleased my poor father." It did not please Mrs. Lyndsay. The bulk of Darrell's fortune thus settled away, he himself would be a very different match for Mrs. Lyndsay; nor was it to her convenience that Matilda should be thus hastily disposed of, and the strongest link of connection between Fulham and Carlton Gardens severed. Mrs. Lyndsay had one golden rule, which I respectfully point out to ladies who covet popularity and power: She never spoke ill of any one whom she wished to injure. She did not, therefore, speak ill of the Marquis to Darrell, but she so praised him that her praise alarmed. She ought to know the young peer well; she was a good deal with the Marchioness, who liked her pretty manners. Till then, Darrell had only noticed this green Head of the Viponts as a neat-looking Head, too modest to open its lips. But he now examined the head with anxious deliberation, and finding it of the poorest possible kind of wood, with a heart to match, Guy Darrell had the audacity to reject, though with great courtesy, the idea of grafting the last plant of his line on a stem so pithless. Though, like men who are at once very affectionate and very busy, he saw few faults in his children, or indeed in any one he really loved, till the fault was forced on him, he could not but be aware that Matilda's sole chance of becoming a happy and safe wife was in uniting herself with such a husband as would at once win her confidence and command her respect. He trembled when he thought of her as the wife of a man whose rank would expose her to all fashionable temptations, and whose character would leave her without a guide or protector.

The Marquis, who obeyed his grandmother from habit, and who had lethargically sanctioned her proposals to Darrell, evinced the liveliest emotion he had ever yet betrayed when he learned that his hand was rejected. And if it were possible for him to carry so small a sentiment as pique into so large a passion as hate, from that moment he aggrandized his nature into hatred. He would have given half his lands to have spited Guy Darrell. Mrs. Lyndsay took care to be at hand to console him, and the Marchioness was grateful to her for taking that troublesome task upon herself. And in the course of their conversations Mrs. Lyndsay contrived to drop into his mind the egg of a project which she took a later occasion to hatch under her plumes of down. "There is but one kind of wife, my dear Montfort, who could increase your importance; you should marry a beauty; next to royalty ranks beauty." The Head nodded, and seemed to ruminate for some moments, and then, *apropos des bottes*, it let fall this mysterious monosyllable, "Shoes." By what process of ratiocination the Head had thus arrived at the feet, it is not for me to conjecture. All I know is that, from that moment, Mrs. Lyndsay bestowed as much thought upon Caroline's *chaussure*, as if, like Cinderella, Caroline's whole destiny in this world hung upon her slipper. With the feelings and the schemes that have been thus intimated, this sensible lady's mortification may well be conceived when she was startled by Darrell's proposal, not to herself, but to her daughter. Her egotism was profoundly shocked, her worldliness cruelly thwarted. With Guy Darrell for her own spouse, the Marquis of Montfort for her daughter's, Mrs. Lyndsay would have been indeed a considerable personage in the world. But to lose Darrell for herself, the Marquis altogether—the idea was intolerable! Yet, since to have refused at once for her portionless daughter a man in so high a position, and to whom her own obligations were so great, was impossible, she adopted a policy, admirable for the craft of its conception and the dexterity of its execution. In exacting the condition of a year's delay, she made her motives appear so loftily disinterested, so magnanimously friendly! She could never forgive herself if he—he—the greatest, the best of men, were again rendered unhappy in marriage by her imprudence (hers, who owed to him her all)! yes, imprudent indeed, to have thrown right in his way a pretty coquettish girl ('for Caroline is coquettish, Mr. Darrell; most girls so pretty are at that silly age'). In short, she carried her point against all the eloquence Darrell could employ, and covered her designs by the semblance of the most delicate scruples, and the sacrifice of worldly advantages to the prudence which belongs to high principle and affectionate caution.

And what were Caroline's real sentiments for Guy Darrell? She understood them *now* on looking back. She saw herself as she was then—as she had stood under the beech-tree, when the heavenly pity that was at the core of her nature—when the venerating, grateful affection that had grown with her growth, made her yearn to be a solace and a joy to that grand and solitary life. Love him! Oh certainly she loved him, devotedly, fondly; but it was with the love

of a child. She had not awakened then to the love of woman. Removed from his presence, suddenly thrown into the great world—yes, Darrell had sketched the picture with a stern but not altogether an untruthful hand. He had not, however, fairly estimated the inevitable influence which a mother, such as Mrs. Lyndsay, would exercise over a girl so wholly inexperienced — so guileless, so unsuspecting, and so filially devoted. He could not appreciate—no man can — the mightiness of female cunning. He could not see how mesh upon mesh the soft Mrs. Lyndsay (pretty woman, with pretty manners) wove her web round the "cousins," until Caroline, who at first had thought of the silent fair-haired young man only as the Head of her House, pleased with attentions that kept aloof admirers, of whom she thought Guy Darrell might be more reasonably jealous, was appalled to hear her mother tell her that she was either the most heartless of coquets, or poor Montfort was the most ill-used of men. But at this time Jasper Losely, under his name of Hammond, brought his wife from the French town at which they had been residing since their marriage, to see Mrs. Lyndsay and Caroline at Paris, and implore their influence to obtain a reconciliation with her father. Matilda soon learned from Mrs. Lyndsay, who affected the most enchanting candor, the nature of the engagement between Caroline and Darrell. She communicated the information to Jasper, who viewed it with very natural alarm. By reconciliation with Guy Darrell, Jasper understood something solid and practical—not a mere sentimental pardon, added to that paltry stipend of £700 a year which he had just obtained—but the restoration to all her rights and expectancies of the heiress he had supposed himself to marry. He had by no means relinquished the belief that sooner or later Darrell would listen to the Voice of Nature, and settle all his fortune on his only child. But then, for the Voice of Nature to have fair play, it was clear that there should be no other child to plead for. And if Darrell were to marry again, and to have sons, what a dreadful dilemma it would be for the Voice of Nature! Jasper was not long in discovering that Caroline's engagement was not less unwelcome to Mrs. Lyndsay than to himself, and that she was disposed to connive at any means by which it might be annulled. Matilda was first employed to weaken the bond it was so desirable to sever. Matilda did not reproach, but she wept. She was sure *now* that she should be an outcast—her children beggars. Mrs. Lyndsay worked up this complaint with adroitest skill. Was Caroline sure that it was not most dishonorable—most treacherous—to rob her own earliest friend of the patrimony that would otherwise return to Matilda with Darrell's pardon? This idea became exquisitely painful to the high-spirited Caroline, but it could not counterpoise the conviction of the greater pain she should occasion to the breast that so confided in her faith, if that faith were broken. Step by step the intrigue against the absent one proceeded. Mrs. Lyndsay thoroughly understood the art of insinuating doubts. Guy Darrell, a man of the world, a cold-blooded lawyer, a busy politician, *he* break his heart for a girl! No, it was only the young, and especially the young when not remarkably clever, who broke their hearts for such trifles. Montfort, indeed —*there* was a man whose heart *could* be broken! whose happiness *could* be blasted! Dear Guy Darrell had been only moved, in his proposals, by generosity—"Something, my dear child, in your own artless words and manner, that made him fancy he had won your affections unknown to yourself! an idea that he was bound as a gentleman to speak out! Just like him. He *has* that spirit of chivalry. But my belief is, that he is quite aware by this time how foolish such a marriage would be, and would thank you heartily if, at the year's end, he found himself free, and you happily disposed of elsewhere," etc., etc. The drama advanced. Mrs. Lyndsay evinced decided pulmonary symptoms. Her hectic cough returned; she could not sleep; her days were numbered—a secret grief. Caroline implored frankness, and, clasped to her mother's bosom, and compassionately bedewed with tears, those hints were dropped into her ear which, though so worded as to show the most indulgent forbearance to Darrell, and rather, as if in compassion for his weakness than in abhorrence of his perfidy, made Caroline start with the indignation of revolted purity and outraged pride. "Were this true, all would be indeed at an end between us! But it is not true. Let it be proved." "But, my dear, dear child, I could not stir in a matter so delicate. I could not aid in breaking off a marriage so much to your worldly advantage, unless you could promise that, in rejecting Mr. Darrell, you would accept your cousin. In my wretched state of health, the anxious thought of leaving you in the world literally penniless would kill me at once!"

"Oh, if Guy Darrell be false (but that is impossible!), do with me all you will; to obey and please you would be the only comfort left to me."

Thus was all prepared for the final *dénouement*. Mrs. Lyndsay had not gone so far without a reliance on the means to accomplish her object, and for these means she had stooped to be indebted to the more practical villainy of Matilda's husband.

Jasper, in this visit to Paris, had first formed the connection, which completed the wickedness of his perverted nature, with that dark adventuress who has flitted shadow-like through part of this varying narrative. Gabrielle Desmarets was then in her youth, notorious only for the ruin she had inflicted on admiring victims, and the superb luxury with which she rioted on their plunder. Captivated by the personal advantages for which Jasper was then pre-eminently conspicuous, she willingly associated her fortunes with his own. Gabrielle was one of those incarnations of evil which no city but Paris can accomplish with the same epicurean refinement, and vitiate into the same cynical corruption. She was exceedingly witty, sharply astute, capable of acting any part, carrying out any plot; and when she pleased to simulate the decorous and immaculate gentlewoman, she might have deceived the most experienced *roué*. Jasper presented this Artiste to his unsuspecting wife as a widow of rank, who was about to visit London, and who might be enabled to see Mr. Darrell, and intercede on their behalf. Matilda fell readily into the snare; the Frenchwoman went to London, with assumed name and title, and

with servants completely in her confidence. And such (as the reader knows already) was that eloquent baroness who had pleaded to Darrell the cause of his penitent daughter! No doubt the wily *Parisienne* had calculated on the effect of her arts and her charms to decoy him into at least a passing forgetfulness of his faith to another. But if she could not succeed there, it might equally achieve the object in view to obtain the credit of that success. Accordingly she wrote to one of her friends at Paris letters stating that she had found a very rich admirer in a celebrated English statesman, to whom she was indebted for her establishment, etc.; and alluding, in very witty and satirical terms, to his matrimonial engagement with the young English beauty at Paris, who was then creating such a sensation—an engagement of which she represented her admirer to be heartily sick, and extremely repentant. Without mentioning names, her descriptions were unmistakable. Jasper, of course, presented to Mrs. Lyndsay those letters (which, he said, the person to whom they were addressed had communicated to one of her own gay friends), and suggested that their evidence against Darrell would be complete in Miss Lyndsay's eyes if some one, whose veracity Caroline could not dispute, could corroborate the assertions of the letters; it would be quite enough to do so if Mr. Darrell were even seen entering or leaving the house of a person whose mode of life was so notorious. Mrs. Lyndsay, who, with her consummate craft, saved her dignity by affected blindness to the artifices at which she connived, declared that, in a matter of inquiry which involved the private character of a man so eminent, and to whom she owed so much, she would not trust his name to the gossip of others. She herself would go to London. She knew that odious, but too fascinating, Gabrielle by sight (as every one did who went to the opera, or drove in the *Bois de Boulogne*). Jasper undertook that the *Parisienne* should show herself at her balcony at a certain day at a certain hour, and that, at that hour, Darrell should call and be admitted; and Mrs. Lyndsay allowed that that evidence would suffice. Sensible of the power over Caroline that she would derive if, with her habits of languor and her delicate health, she could say that she had undertaken such a journey to be convinced with her own eyes of a charge that, if true, would influence her daughter's conduct and destiny—Mrs. Lyndsay did go to London—did see Gabrielle Desmarets at her balcony—did see Darrell enter the house; and on her return to Paris did, armed with this testimony, and with the letters that led to it, so work upon her daughter's mind that the next day the Marquis of Montfort was accepted. But the year of Darrell's probation was nearly expired; all delay would be dangerous—all explanation would be fatal, and must be forestalled. Nor could a long courtship be kept secret; Darrell might hear of it, and come over at once; and the Marquis's ambitious kinsfolk would not fail to interfere if the news of his intended marriage with a portionless cousin came to their ears. Lord Montfort, who was awed by Carr, and extremely afraid of his grandmother, was not less anxious for secrecy and expedition than Mrs. Lyndsay herself.

Thus, then, Mrs. Lyndsay triumphed, and while her daughter was still under the influence of an excitement which clouded her judgment, and stung her into rashness of action as an escape from the torment of reflection—thus were solemnized Caroline's unhappy and splendid nuptials. The Marquis hired a villa in the delightful precincts of Fontainebleau for his honeymoon; that moon was still young when the Marquis said to himself, "I don't find that it produces honey." When he had first been attracted toward Caroline, she was all life and joy—too much of a child to pine for Darrell's absence, while credulously confident of their future union—her spirits naturally wild and lively, and the world, opening at her feet, so novel and so brilliant. This fresh gayety had amused the Marquis—he felt cheated when he found it gone. Caroline might be gentle, docile, submissive; but those virtues, though of higher quality than glad animal spirits, are not so entertaining. His own exceeding sterility of mind and feeling was not apparent till in the *têtes-à-têtes* of conjugal life. A good-looking young man, with a thorough-bred air, who rides well, dances well, and holds his tongue, may, in all mixed societies, pass for a shy youth of sensitive genius. But when he is your companion for life, and all to yourself, and you find that, when he does talk, he has neither an idea nor a sentiment—alas! alas for you, young bride, if you have ever known the charm of intellect, or the sweetness of sympathy. But it was not for Caroline to complain; struggling against her own weight of sorrow, she had no immediate perception of her companion's vapidity. It was he, poor man, who complained. He just detected enough of her superiority of intelligence to suspect that he was humiliated, while sure that he was bored. An incident converted his growing indifference into permanent dislike not many days after their marriage.

Lord Montfort, sauntering into Caroline's room, found her insensible on the floor—an open letter by her side. Summoning her maid to her assistance, he took the marital privilege of reading the letter which had apparently caused her swoon. It was from Matilda, and written in a state of maddened excitement. Matilda had little enough of what is called heart; but she had an intense selfishness, which, in point of suffering, supplies the place of a heart. It was not because she could not feel for the wrongs of another that she could not feel anguish for her own. Arabella was avenged. The cold-blooded snake that had stung her met the fang of the cobra-capella. Matilda had learned from some anonymous correspondent (probably a rival of Gabrielle's) of Jasper's *liaison* with that adventuress. But half-recovered from her confinement, she had risen from her bed—hurried to Paris (for the pleasures of which her husband had left her)—seen this wretched Gabrielle—recognized in her the false baroness to whom Jasper had presented her—to whom, by Jasper's dictation, she had written such affectionate letters—whom she had employed to plead her cause to her father;—seen Gabrielle—seen her at her own luxurious apartment, Jasper at home there—burst into vehement wrath—roused up the cobra-capella; and on declaring that she would separate from her husband, go back to her father, tell her wrongs, appeal to his mercy, Gabrielle calm-

ly replied, "Do so, and I will take care that your father shall know that your plea for his pardon through Madame la Baronne was a scheme to blacken his name, and to frustrate his marriage. Do not think that he will suppose you did not connive at a project so sly; he must know you too well, pretty innocent." No match for Gabrielle Desmarets, Matilda flung from the house, leaving Jasper whistling an air from *Figaro;* returned alone to the French town, from which she now wrote to Caroline, pouring out her wrongs, and without seeming sensible that Caroline had been wronged too, expressing her fear that her father might believe her an accomplice in Jasper's plot, and refuse her the means to live apart from the wretch, upon whom she heaped every epithet that just indignation could suggest to a feeble mind. The latter part of the letter, blurred and blotted, was incoherent, almost raving. In fact, Matilda was then seized by the mortal illness which hurried her to the grave. To the Marquis much of this letter was extremely uninteresting—much of it quite incomprehensible. He could not see why it should so overpoweringly affect his wife. Only those passages which denounced a scheme to frustrate some marriage meditated by Mr. Darrell made him somewhat uneasy, and appeared to him to demand explanation. But Caroline, in the anguish to which she awakened, forestalled his inquiries. To her but two thoughts were present—how she had wronged Darrell—how ungrateful and faithless she must seem to him; and in the impulse of her remorse, and in the childlike candor of her soul, artlessly, ingenuously she poured out her feelings to the husband she had taken as counselor and guide, as if seeking to guard all her sorrow for the past from a sentiment that might render her less loyal to the responsibilities which linked her future to another's. A man of sense would have hailed, in so noble a confidence (however it might have pained him for the time), a guarantee for the happiness and security of his whole existence. He would have seen how distinct from that ardent love which, in Caroline's new relation of life, would have bordered upon guilt, and been cautious as guilt against disclosing its secrets, was the infantine, venerating affection she had felt for a man so far removed from her by years and the development of intellect—an affection which a young husband, trusted with every thought, every feeling, might reasonably hope to eclipse. A little forbearance, a little of delicate and generous tenderness, at that moment, would have secured to Lord Montfort the warm devotion of a grateful heart, in which the grief that overflowed was not for the irreplaceable loss of an earlier lover, but the repentant shame for wrong and treachery to a confiding friend.

But it is in vain to ask from any man that which is not in him! Lord Montfort listened with sullen, stolid displeasure. That Caroline should feel the slightest pain at any cause which had canceled her engagement to that odious Darrell, and had raised her to the rank of his marchioness, was a crime in his eyes never to be expiated. He considered, not without reason, that Mrs. Lyndsay had shamefully deceived him; and fully believed that she had been an accomplice with Jasper in that artifice which he was quite gentleman enough to consider placed those who had planned it out of the pale of his acquaintance. And when Caroline, who had been weeping too vehemently to read her lord's countenance, came to a close, Lord Montfort took up his hat and said, "I beg never to hear again of this lawyer and his very disreputable family connections. As you say, you and your mother have behaved very ill to him; but you don't seem to understand that you have behaved much worse to me. As to condescending to write to him, and enter into explanations how you came to be Lady Montfort, it would be so lowering to me that I would never forgive it—never. I would just as soon that you run away at once—sooner. As for Mrs. Lyndsay, I shall forbid her entering my house. When you have done crying, order your things to be packed up. I shall return to England to-morrow."

That was perhaps the longest speech Lord Montfort ever addressed to his wife; perhaps it was also the rudest. From that time he regarded her as some Spaniard of ancient days might regard a guest on whom he was compelled to bestow the rites of hospitality—to whom he gave a seat at his board, a chair at his hearth, but for whom he entertained a profound aversion, and kept at invincible distance, with all the ceremony of dignified dislike. Once only during her wedded life Caroline again saw Darrell. It was immediately on her return to England, and little more than a month after her marriage. It was the day on which Parliament had been prorogued preparatory to its dissolution—the last Parliament of which Guy Darrell was a member. Lady Montfort's carriage was detained in the throng with which the ceremonial had filled the streets, and Darrell passed it on horseback. It was but one look in that one moment; and the look never ceased to haunt her—a look of such stern disdain, but also of such deep despair. No language can exaggerate the eloquence which there is in a human countenance, when a great and tortured spirit speaks out from it accusingly to a soul that comprehends. The crushed heart, the ravaged existence, were bared before her in that glance, as clearly as to a wanderer through the night are the rents of the precipice in the flash of the lightning. So they encountered—so, without word, they parted. To him that moment decided the flight from active life to which his hopeless thoughts had of late been wooing the jaded, weary man. In safety to his very conscience, he would not risk the certainty thus to encounter one whom it convulsed his whole being to remember was another's wife. In that highest and narrowest sphere of the great London world to which Guy Darrell's political distinction condemned his social life, it was impossible but what he should be brought frequently into collision with Lord Montfort, the Head of a House with which Darrell himself was connected—the most powerful patrician of the party of which Darrell was so conspicuous a chief. Could he escape Lady Montfort's presence, her name, at least, would be continually in his ears. From that fatal beauty he could no more hide than from the sun.

This thought, and the terror it occasioned him, completed his resolve on the instant. The next day he was in the groves of Fawley, and

amazed the world by dating from that retreat a farewell address to his constituents. A few days after, the news of his daughter's death reached him; and as that event became known, it accounted to many for his retirement for a while from public life.

But to Caroline Montfort, and to her alone, the secret of a career blasted, a fame renounced, was unmistakably revealed. For a time she was tortured, in every society she entered, by speculation and gossip which brought before her the memory of his genius, the accusing sound of his name. But him, who withdraws himself from the world, the world soon forgets; and by degrees Darrell became as little spoken of as the dead.

Mrs. Lyndsay had never, during her schemes on Lord Montfort, abandoned her own original design on Darrell. And when, to her infinite amaze and mortification, Lord Montfort, before the first month of his marriage expired, took care, in the fewest possible words, to dispel her dream of governing the House, and residing in the houses, of Vipont, as the lawful regent during the life-long minority to which she had condemned both the submissive Caroline and the lethargic Marquis, she hastened by letter to exculpate herself to Darrell—laid, of course, all the blame on Caroline. Alas! had not she always warned him that Caroline was not worthy of him?—him, the greatest, the best of men, etc., etc. Darrell replied by a single cut of his trenchant sarcasm—sarcasm which shore through her cushion of down and her vail of gauze like the sword of Saladin. The old Marchioness turned her back upon Mrs. Lyndsay. Lady Selina was crushingly civil. The pretty woman with pretty manners, no better off for all the misery she had occasioned, went to Rome, caught cold, and, having no one to nurse her as Caroline had done, fell at last into a real consumption, and faded out of the world elegantly and spitefully, as fades a rose that still leaves its thorns behind it.

Caroline's nature grew developed and exalted by the responsibilities she had accepted, and by the purity of her grief. She submitted, as a just retribution, to the solitude and humiliation of her wedded lot; she earnestly, virtuously strove to banish from her heart every sentiment that could recall to her more of Darrell than the remorse of having so darkened a life that had been to her childhood so benignant, and to her youth so confiding. As we have seen her, at the mention of Darrell's name—at the allusion to his griefs—fly to the side of her ungenial lord, though he was to her but as the owner of the name she bore, so it was the saving impulse of a delicate, watchful conscience that kept her as honest in thought as she was irreproachable in conduct. But vainly, in summoning her intellect to the relief of her heart—vainly had she sought to find in the world friendships, companionships, that might eclipse the memory of the mind so lofty in its antique mould—so tender in its depths of unsuspected sweetness—which had been withdrawn from her existence before she could fully comprehend its rarity, or appreciate its worth.

At last she became free once more; and then she had dared thoroughly to examine into her own heart, and into the nature of that hold which the image of Darrell still retained on its remembrances. And precisely because she was convinced that she had succeeded in preserving her old childish affection for him free from the growth into that warm love which would have been guilt if so encouraged, she felt the more free to volunteer the atonement which might permit her to dedicate herself to his remaining years. Thus, one day, after a conversation with Alban Morley, in which Alban had spoken of Darrell as the friend, almost the virtual guardian, of her infancy; and, alluding to a few lines just received from him, brought vividly before Caroline the picture of Darrell's melancholy wanderings and blighted life—thus had she, on the impulse of the moment, written the letter which had reached Darrell at Malta. In it she referred but indirectly to the deceit that had been practiced on herself—far too delicate to retail a scandal which she felt to be an insult to his dignity, in which, too, the deceiving parties were his daughter's husband and her own mother. No doubt every true woman can understand why she thus wrote to Darrell, and every true man can equally comprehend why that letter failed in its object, and was returned to her in scorn. Hers was the yearning of meek, passionless affection, and his the rebuke of sensitive, embittered, indignant love.

But now, as all her past, with its interior life, glided before her, by a grief the most intolerable she had yet known, the woman became aware that it was no longer penitence for the injured friend—it was despair for the lover she had lost. In that stormy interview, out of all the confused and struggling elements of her life-long self-reproach, LOVE—the love of woman—had flashed suddenly, luminously, as the love of youth at first sight. Strange—but the very disparity of years seemed gone! She, the matured, sorrowful woman, was so much nearer to the man, still young in heart, and little changed in person, than the gay girl of seventeen had been to the grave friend of forty! Strange, but those vehement reproaches had awakened emotions deeper in the core of the wild mortal breast than all that early chivalrous homage which had exalted her into the ideal of dreaming poets. Strange, strange, strange! But where there is nothing strange, *there*—is there ever love?

And with this revelation of her own altered heart came the clearer and fresher insight into the nature and character of the man she loved. Hitherto she had recognized but his virtues—now she beheld his failings; beholding them *as if virtues*, loved him more; and, loving him, more despaired. She recognized that all-pervading indomitable pride, which, interwoven with his sense of honor, became as relentless as it was unrevengeful. She comprehended now, that the more he loved her, the less he would forgive; and, recalling the unexpected gentleness of his farewell words, she felt that in his promised blessing lay the sentence that annihilated every hope!

CHAPTER III.

Whatever the number of a man's friends, there will be times in his life when he has one too few; but if he has only one enemy, he is lucky indeed if he has not one too many.

A COLD night; sharp frost; winter set in. The shutters are closed, the curtains drawn, the fire burns clear, and the lights are softly shaded in Alban Morley's drawing-room. The old bachelor is at home again. He had returned that day; sent to Lionel to come to him; and Lionel had already told him what had transpired in his absence—from the identification of Waife with William Losely, to Lady Montfort's visit to Fawley, which had taken place two days before, and of which she had informed Lionel by a few hasty lines, stating her inability to soften Mr. Darrell's objections to the alliance between Lionel and Sophy; severely blaming herself that those objections had not more forcibly presented themselves to her own mind, and concluding with expressions of sympathy, and appeals to fortitude, in which, however brief, the exquisite kindness of her nature so diffused its charm, that the soft words soothed insensibly, like those sounds which in Nature itself do soothe us we know not why.

The poor Colonel found himself in the midst of painful subjects. Though he had no very keen sympathy for the sorrows of lovers, and no credulous faith in everlasting attachments, Lionel's portraiture of the young girl, who formed so mysterious a link between the two men who, in varying ways, had touched the finest springs in his own heart, compelled a compassionate and chivalrous interest, and he was deeply impressed by the quiet of Lionel's dejection. The young man uttered no complaints of the inflexibility with which Darrell had destroyed his elysium. He bowed to the will with which it was in vain to argue, and which it would have been a criminal ingratitude to defy. But his youth seemed withered up; down-eyed and listless he sank into that stupor of despondency which so drearily simulates the calm of resignation.

"I have but one wish now," said he, "and that is, to change at once into some regiment on active service. I do not talk of courting danger and seeking death. That would be either a senseless commonplace, or a threat, as it were, to Heaven! But I need some vehemence of action—some positive and irresistible call upon honor or duty that may force me to contend against this strange heaviness that settles down on my whole life. Therefore, I entreat you so to arrange for me, and break it to Mr. Darrell in such terms as may not needlessly pain him by the obtrusion of my sufferings. For, while I know him well enough to be convinced that nothing could move him from resolves in which he had intrenched, as in a citadel, his pride or his creed of honor, I am sure that he would take into his own heart all the grief which those resolves occasioned to another's."

"You do him justice there!" cried Alban; "you are a noble fellow to understand him so well! Sir, you have in you the stuff that makes English gentlemen such generous soldiers."

"Action, action, action!" exclaimed Lionel. "Strife, strife! No other chance of cure. Rest is so crushing, solitude so dismal."

Lo! how contrasted the effect of a similar cause of grief at different stages of life! Chase the first day-dreams of our youth, and we cry, "Action—Strife!" In that cry, unconsciously to ourselves, HOPE speaks, and proffers worlds of emotion not yet exhausted. Disperse the last golden illusion in which the image of happiness cheats our experienced manhood, and HOPE is silent; she has no more words to offer—unless, indeed, she drop her earthly attributes, change her less solemn name, and float far out of sight as "FAITH!"

Alban made no immediate reply to Lionel; but, seating himself still more comfortably in his chair—planting his feet still more at ease upon his fender—the kindly man of the world silently revolved all the possible means by which Darrell might yet be softened and Lionel rendered happy. His reflections dismayed him. "Was there ever such untoward luck," he said at last, and peevishly, "that out of the whole world you should fall in love with the very girl against whom Darrell's feelings (prejudices, if you please) must be mailed in adamant! Convinced, and apparently with every reason, that she is not his daughter's child, but, however innocently, an impostor, how can he receive her as his young kinsman's bride? How can we expect it?"

"But," said Lionel, "if, on farther investigation, she prove to be his daughter's child—the sole surviving representative of his line and name?"

"*His* name! No! of the name of Losely—the name of that turbulent sharper who may yet die on the gibbet—of that poor, dear, lovable rascal Willy, who was goose enough to get himself transported for robbery!—a felon's grandchild the representative of Darrell's line! But how on earth came Lady Montfort to favor so wild a project, and encourage you to share in it?—she who ought to have known Darrell better?"

"Alas! she saw but Sophy's exquisite, simple virtues, and inborn grace; and, believing her claim to Darrell's lineage, Lady Montfort thought but of the joy and blessing one so good and so loving might bring to his joyless hearth. She was not thinking of morbid pride and mouldering ancestors, but of soothing charities and loving ties. And Lady Montfort, I now suspect, in her scheme for our happiness—for Darrell's—had an interest which involved her own!"

"Her own!"

"Yes; I see it all now."

"See what? you puzzle me."

"I told you that Darrell, in his letter to me, wrote with great bitterness of Lady Montfort."

"Very natural that he should. Who would not resent such interference?"

"Listen. I told you that, at his own command, I sent to her that letter; that she, on receiving it, went herself to Fawley, to plead our cause. I was sanguine of the result."

"Why?"

"Because he who is in love has a wondrous intuition into all the mysteries of love in others; and when I read Darrell's letter, I felt sure that he had once loved—loved still, per-

haps—the woman he so vehemently reproached."

"Ha!" said the man of the world, intimate with Guy Darrell from his school-days; "ha! is it possible? And they say that I know every thing! You were sanguine — I understand. Yes, if your belief were true — if there were some old attachment that could be revived—some old misunderstanding explained away—stop; let me think. True, true — it was just after her marriage that he fled from the world. Ah, my dear Lionel! light, light! light dawns on me! Not without reason were you sanguine. Your hand, my dear boy; I see hope for you at last. For if the sole reason that prevented Darrell contracting a second marriage was the unconquered memory of a woman like Lady Montfort (where, indeed, her equal in beauty, in dispositions so akin to his own ideal of womanly excellence?)—and if she too has some correspondent sentiments for him, why, then, indeed, you might lose all chance of being Darrell's sole heir; your Sophy might forfeit the hateful claim to be the sole scion on his ancient tree. But it is precisely by those losses that Lionel Haughton might gain the bride he covets; and if this girl prove to be what these Loselys affirm, that very marriage, which is now so repugnant to Darrell, ought to insure his blessing. Were he himself to marry again—had he rightful representatives and heirs in his own sons—he should rejoice in the nuptials that secured to his daughter's child so honorable a name and so tender a protector. And as for inheritance, you have not been reared to expect it; you have never counted on it. You would receive a fortune sufficiently ample to restore your ancestral station; your career will add honors to fortune. Yes, yes; that is the sole way out of all these difficulties. Darrell must marry again; Lady Montfort must be his wife. Lionel shall be free to choose her whom Lady Montfort approves—befriends—no matter what her birth; and I—I—Alban Morley—shall have an arm-chair by two smiling hearths."

At this moment there was heard a violent ring at the bell, a loud knock at the street door; and presently, following close on the servant, and pushing him aside as he asked what name to announce, a woman, severely dressed in iron gray, with a strongly-marked and haggard countenance, hurried into the room, and, striding right up to Alban Morley as he rose from his seat, grasped his arm, and whispered into his ear, "Lose not a minute; come with me instantly—as you value the safety, perhaps the life, of Guy Darrell!"

"Guy Darrell!" exclaimed Lionel, overhearing her, despite the undertones of her voice.

"Who are you?" she said, turning fiercely; "are you one of his family?"

"His kinsman—almost his adopted son—Mr. Lionel Haughton," said the Colonel. "But pardon me, madam—who are you?"

"Do you not remember me? Yet you were so often in Darrell's house that you must have seen my face, as you have learned from your friend how little cause I have to care for him or his. Look again; I am that Arabella Fossett who—"

"Ah! I remember now; but—"

"But I tell you that Darrell is in danger, and this night. Take money; to be in time you must hire a special train. Take arms, though to be used only in self-defense. Take your servant, if he is brave. This young kinsman—let him come too. There is only one man to resist; but that man," she said, with a wild kind of pride, "would have the strength and courage of ten, were his cause not that which may make the strong man weak and the bold man craven. It is not a matter for the officers of justice, for law, for scandal: the service is to be done in secret, by friends, by kinsmen; for the danger that threatens Darrell—stoop—stoop, Colonel Morley—close in your ear;" and into his ear she hissed, "for the danger that threatens Darrell in his house this night is from the man whose name his daughter bore. That is why I come to you. To you I need not say, 'Spare his life—Jasper Losely's life.' Jasper Losely's death as a midnight robber would be Darrell's intolerable shame! Quick, quick, quick!—come, come!"

BOOK X.

CHAPTER I.

Brute force.

We left Jasper Losely resting for the night at the small town near Fawley. The next morning he walked on to the old Manor House. It was the same morning in which Lady Montfort had held her painful interview with Darrell; and just when Losely neared the gate that led into the small park, he saw her re-enter the hired vehicle in waiting for her. As the carriage rapidly drove past the miscreant, Lady Montfort looked forth from the window to snatch a last look at the scenes still so dear to her, through eyes blinded by despairing tears. Jasper thus caught sight of her countenance, and recognized her, though she did not even notice him. Surprised at the sight, he halted by the palings. What could have brought Lady Montfort there? Could the intimacy his fraud had broken off so many years ago be renewed? If so, why the extreme sadness so evident on the face of which he had caught but a hurried, rapid glance? Be that as it might, it was no longer of the interest to him it had once been; and after pondering on the circumstance a minute or two, he advanced to the gate. But while his hand was on the latch he again paused; how should he obtain admission to Darrell? how announce himself? If in his own name, would not exclusion be certain? If as a stranger on business, would Darrell be sure to receive him? As he was thus cogitating, his ear, which, with all his other organs of sense, was constitutionally fine as a savage's, caught sound of a faint rustle among the boughs of a thick copse which covered a part of the little park, terminating at its pales. The rustle came nearer and nearer; the branches were rudely displaced; and in a few moments more Guy Darrell himself came out from the copse, close by the gate, and, opening it quickly, stood face to face with his abhorrent son-in-law. Jasper was startled, but the opportunity was not to be lost. "Mr. Darrell," he said, "I come here again to see you; vouchsafe me this time a calmer hearing." So changed was Losely, so absorbed in his own emotions Darrell, that the words did not at once waken up remembrance. "Another time," said Darrell, hastily moving on into the road; "I am not at leisure now."

"Pardon me, *now*," said Losely, unconsciously bringing himself back to the tones and bearing of his earlier and more civilized years. "You do not remember me, Sir; no wonder. But my name is Jasper Losely."

Darrell halted; then, still as if spell-bound, looked fixedly at the broad-shouldered, burly frame before him, cased in its coarse pea-jacket, and in that rude form, and that defeatured, bloated face, detected, though with strong effort, the wrecks of the masculine beauty which had ensnared his deceitful daughter. Jasper could not have selected a more unpropitious moment for his cause. Darrell was still too much under the influence of recent excitement and immense sorrow for that supremacy of prudence over passion which could alone have made him a willing listener to overtures from Jasper Losely. And about the man whose connection with himself was a thought of such bitter shame, there was now so unmistakably the air of settled degradation, that all Darrell's instincts of gentleman were revolted—just at the very time, too, when his pride had been most chafed and assailed by the obtrusion of all that rendered most galling to him the very name of Jasper Losely. What! was it that man's asserted child whom Lionel Haughton desired as a wife? was the alliance with that man to be thus renewed and strengthened? that man have another claim to him and his in right of parentage to the bride of his nearest kinsman? What! was it that man's child whom he was asked to recognize as of his own flesh and blood? the last representative of his line? That man!—*that!* A flash shot from his bright eye, deepening its gray into dark; and, turning on his heel, Darrell said, through his compressed lips,

"You have heard, Sir, I believe, through Colonel Morley, that only on condition of your permanent settlement in one of our distant colonies, or America, if you prefer it, would I consent to assist you. I am of the same mind still. I can not parley with you myself. Colonel Morley is abroad, I believe. I refer you to my solicitor; you have seen him years ago; you know his address. No more, Sir."

"This will not do, Mr. Darrell," said Losely, doggedly; and, planting himself right before Darrell's way, "I have come here on purpose to have all differences out with you, face to face—and I will—"

"You will!" said Darrell, pale with haughty anger, and, with the impulse of his passion, his hand clenched. In the bravery of his nature, and the warmth of a temper constitutionally quick, he thought nothing of the strength and bulk of the insolent intruder—nothing of the peril of odds so unequal in a personal encounter. But the dignity which pervaded all his habits, and often supplied to him the place of discretion, came, happily for himself, to his aid now. *He* strike a man whom he so despised! he raise that man to his own level by the honor of a blow from his hand! Impossible! "You will!" he said. "Well, be it so. Are you come again to tell me that a child of my daughter lives, and that you won my daughter's fortune by a deliberate lie?"

"I am not come to speak of that girl, but of myself. I say that I have a claim on you, Mr. Darrell; I say that, turn and twist the truth as you will, you are still my father-in-law, and that it is intolerable that I should be wanting bread, or driven into actual robbery, while my wife's father is a man of countless wealth, and has no heir except—but I will not now urge that child's

cause; I am content to abandon it, if so obnoxious to you. Do you wish me to cut a throat, and to be hanged, and all the world to hear the last dying speech and confession of Guy Darrell's son-in-law? Answer me, Sir!"

"I answer you briefly and plainly. It is simply because I would not have that last disgrace on Guy Darrell's name that I offer you a subsistence in lands where you will be less exposed to those temptations which induced you to invest the sums that, by your own tale, had been obtained from me on false pretenses, in the sink of a Paris gambling-house. A subsistence that, if it does not pamper vice, at least places you beyond the necessity of crime, is at your option. Choose it or reject it as you will."

"Look you, Mr. Darrell," said Jasper, whose temper was fast giving way beneath the cold and galling scorn with which he was thus cast aside, "I am in a state so desperate, that, rather than starve, I may take what you so contemptuously fling to—your daughter's husband; but—"

"Knave!" cried Darrell, interrupting him, "do you again and again urge it as a claim upon me, that you decoyed from her home, under a false name, my only child; that she died in a foreign land—broken-hearted, if I have rightly heard; is that a claim upon your duped victim's father?"

"It seems so, since your pride is compelled to own that the world would deem it one, if the jail-chaplain took down the last words of your son-in-law. But, *basta, basta!* hear me out, and spare hard names; for the blood is mounting into my brain, and I may become dangerous. Had any other man eyed, and scoffed, and railed at me as you have done, he would be lying dead and dumb as this stone at my foot; but you—are my father-in-law. Now, I care not to bargain with you what be the precise amount of my stipend if I obey your wish, and settle miserably in one of those raw, comfortless corners into which they who burden this Old World are thrust out of sight. I would rather live my time out in this country—live it out in peace, and for half what you may agree to give in transporting me. If you are to do any thing for me, you had better do it so as to make me contented on easy terms to your own pockets, rather than to leave me dissatisfied, and willing to annoy you, which I could do somehow or other, even on the far side of the Herring Pond. I might keep to the letter of a bargain, live in Phillip's Town or Adelaide, and take your money, and yet molest and trouble you by deputy. That girl, for instance—your grandchild; well, well, disown her if you please; but if I find out where she is, which I own I have not done yet, I might contrive to render her the plague of your life, even though I were in Australia."

"Ay," said Darrell, murmuring—"ay, ay; but"—(suddenly gathering himself up)—"No! Man, if she were my grandchild, your own child, could you talk of her thus?—make her the object of so base a traffic, and such miserable threats? Wicked though you be, this were against nature!—even in nature's wickedness—even in the son of a felon, and in the sharper of a hell. Pooh! I despise your malice. I will listen to you no longer. Out of my path!"

"No!"

"No?"

"No, Guy Darrell, I have not yet done; you shall hear my terms, and accept them—a moderate sum down; say a few hundreds, and two hundred a year to spend in London as I will—but out of your beat, out of your sight and hearing. Grant this, and I will never cross you again—never attempt to find, and, if I find by chance, never claim, as my child by your daughter, that wandering girl. I will never shame you by naming our connection. I will not offend the law, nor die by the hangman; yet I shall not live long, for I suffer much, and I drink hard."

The last words were spoken gloomily, not altogether without a strange dreary pathos. And amidst all his just scorn and anger, the large human heart of Guy Darrell was for the moment touched. He was silent—his mind hesitated; would it not be well—would it not be just as safe to his own peace, and to that of the poor child, whom, no matter what her parentage, Darrell could not but desire to free from the claim set up by so bold a ruffian, to gratify Losely's wish, and let him remain in England, upon an allowance that would suffice for his subsistence? Unluckily for Jasper, it was while this doubt passed through Darrell's relenting mind that the miscreant, who was shrewd enough to see that he had gained ground but too coarse of apprehension to ascribe his advantage to its right cause, thought to strengthen his case by additional arguments. "You see, Sir," resumed Jasper, in almost familiar accents, "that there is no dog so toothless but what he can bite, and no dog so savage but what, if you give him plenty to eat, he will serve you."

Darrell looked up, and his brow slowly darkened.

Jasper continued—"I have hinted how I might plague you: perhaps, on the other hand, I might do you a good turn with that handsome lady who drove from your park gate as I came up. Ah! you were once to have been married to her. I read in the newspapers that she has become a widow: you may marry her yet. There was a story against you once; her mother made use of it, and broke off an old engagement. I can set that story right."

"You can," said Darrell, with that exceeding calmness which comes from exceeding wrath; "and perhaps, Sir, that story, whatever it might be, you invented. No dog so toothless as not to bite—eh, Sir?"

"Well," returned Jasper, mistaking Darrell's composure, "at that time certainly it seemed my interest that you should not marry again;—but *basta! basta!* enough of by-gones. If I bit once, I will serve now. Come, Sir, you are a man of the world, let us close the bargain."

All Darrell's soul was now up in arms. What, then! this infamous wretch was the author of the tale by which the woman he had loved, as woman never was loved before, had excused her breach of faith, and been lost to him for ever? And he learned this, while yet fresh from her presence—fresh from the agonizing conviction that his heart loved still, but could not pardon. With a spring so sudden that it took Losely utterly by surprise, he leaped on the bravo, swung aside that huge bulk which Jasper had boasted four draymen could not stir against its will,

cleared his way; and turning back before Losely had recovered his amaze, cried out, "Execrable villain! I revoke every offer to aid a life that has existed but to darken and desolate those it was permitted to approach. Starve or rob! perish miserably! And if I pour not on your head my parting curse, it is only because I know that man has no right to curse; and casting you back on your own evil self is the sole revenge which my belief in Heaven permits me."

Thus saying, Darrell strode on—swiftly, but not as one who flies. Jasper made three long bounds, and was almost at his side, when he was startled by the explosion of a gun. A pheasant fell dead on the road, and Darrell's gamekeeper, gun in hand, came through a gap in the hedge opposite the park pales, and seeing his master close before him, approached to apologize for the suddenness of the shot.

Whatever Losely's intention in hastening after Darrell, he had no option now but to relinquish it, and drop back. The village itself was not many hundred yards distant; and, after all, what good in violence, except the gratified rage of the moment? Violence would not give to Jasper Losely the income that had just been within his grasp, and had so unexpectedly eluded it. He remained, therefore, in the lane, standing still, and seeing Darrell turn quietly into his park through another gate close to the Manor House. The gamekeeper, meanwhile, picked up his bird, reloaded his gun, and eyed Jasper suspiciously askant. The baffled gladiator at length turned, and walked slowly back to the town he had left. It was late in the afternoon when he once more gained his corner in the coffee-room of his commercial inn; and, to his annoyance, the room was crowded—it was market-day. Farmers, their business over, came in and out in quick succession; those who did not dine at the ordinaries, taking their hasty snack, or stirrup-cup, while their horses were being saddled; others to look at the newspaper, or exchange a word on the state of markets and the nation. Jasper, wearied and sullen, had to wait for the refreshments he ordered, and meanwhile fell into a sort of half doze, as was not now unusual in him in the intervals between food and mischief. From this creeping torpor he was suddenly roused by the sound of Darrell's name. Three farmers, standing close beside him, their backs to the fire, were tenants to Darrell—two of them on the lands that Darrell had purchased in the years of his territorial ambition; the third resided in the hamlet of Fawley, and rented the larger portion of the comparatively barren acres to which the old patrimonial estate was circumscribed. These farmers were talking of their Squire's return to the county—of his sequestered mode of life—of his peculiar habits—of the great unfinished house which was left to rot. The Fawley tenant then said that it might not be left to rot after all, and that the village workmen had been lately employed, and still were, in getting some of the rooms into rough order; and then he spoke of the long gallery in which the Squire had been arranging his fine pictures, and how he had run up a passage between that gallery and his own room, and how he would spend hours at day, and night too, in that awful long room, as lone as a church-yard; and that Mr. Mills had said that his master now lived almost entirely either in that gallery or in the room in the roof of the old house—quite cut off, as you might say, except from the eyes of those dead pictures, or the rats, which had grown so excited at having their quarters in the new building invaded, that if you peeped in at the windows in moonlit nights you might see them in dozens, sitting on their haunches as if holding council, or peering at the curious old things which lay beside the crates out of which they had been taken. Then the rustic gossips went on to talk of the rent-day, which was at hand—of the audit feast, which, according to immemorial custom, was given at the old Manor House on that same rent-day—supposed that Mr. Fairthorn would preside—that the Squire himself would not appear—made some incidental observations on their respective rents and wheat crops—remarked that they should have a good moonlight for their ride back from the audit feast—cautioned each other, laughing, not to drink too much of Mr. Fairthorn's punch—and finally went their way, leaving on the mind of Jasper Losely—who, leaning his scheming head on his powerful hand, had appeared in dull sleep all the while—these two facts: 1st, That on the third day from that which was then declining, sums amounting to thousands would find their way into Fawley Manor House; and, 2dly, That a communication existed between the unfinished, uninhabited building and Darrell's own solitary chamber. As soon as he had fortified himself by food and drink, Jasper rose, paid for his refreshments, and walked forth. Noiseless and rapid, skirting the hedge-rows by the lane that led to Fawley, and scarcely distinguishable under their shadow, the human wild-beast strided on in scent of its quarry. It was night when Jasper once more reached the moss-grown pales round the demesnes of the old Manor House. In a few minutes he was standing under the black shadow of the buttresses to the unfinished pile. His object was not then to assault, but to reconnoitre. He prowled round the irregular walls, guided in his survey, now and then, faintly by the stars—more constantly and clearly by the lights from the contiguous Manor House—more especially the light from that high chamber in the gable, close by which ran the thin frame-work of wood which linked the two buildings of stone, just as any frail scheme links together the Past, which man has not enjoyed, with the Future he will not complete. Jasper came to a large bay unglazed window, its sill but a few feet from the ground, from which the boards, nailed across the mullions, had been removed by the workmen whom Darrell had employed on the interior, and were replaced but by a loose tarpaulin. Pulling aside this slight obstacle, Jasper had no difficulty in entering through the wide mullions into the dreary edifice. Finding himself in profound darkness, he had recourse to a lucifer-box which he had about him, and the waste of a dozen matches sufficed him to examine the ground. He was in a space intended by the architect for the principal stair-case; a tall ladder, used by the recent workmen, was still left standing against the wall, the top of it resting on a landing-place opposite a door-way, that, from the richness of its half-finished architrave, obviously led to what had been designed for the state apartments;

between the pediments was a slight temporary door of rough deal planks. Satisfied with his reconnoitre, Losely quitted the skeleton pile and retraced his steps to the inn he had left. His musings by the way suggested to him the expediency, nay, the necessity, of an accomplice. Implements might be needed—disguises would be required—swift horses for flight to be hired—and, should the robbery succeed, the bulk of the spoil would be no doubt in bank-notes, which it would need some other hand than his own to dispose of, either at the bank next morning at the earliest hour, or by transmission abroad. For help in all this Jasper knew no one to compare to Cutts; nor did he suspect his old ally of any share in the conspiracy against him, of which he had been warned by Mrs. Crane. Resolving, therefore, to admit that long-tried friend into his confidence and a share of the spoils, he quickened his pace, arrived at the railway-station in time for a late train to London, and, disdainful of the dangers by which he was threatened in return to any of the haunts of his late associates, gained the dark court wherein he had effected a lodgment on the night of his return to London, and roused Cutts from his slumbers with tales of an enterprise so promising, that the small man began to recover his ancient admiration for the genius to which he had bowed at Paris, but which had fallen into his contempt in London.

Mr. Cutts held a very peculiar position in that section of the great world to which he belonged. He possessed the advantage of an education superior to that of the generality of his companions, having been originally a clerk to an Old Bailey attorney, and having since that early day accomplished his natural shrewdness by a variety of speculative enterprises both at home and abroad. In these adventures he had not only contrived to make money, but, what is very rare with the foes of law, to save it. Being a bachelor, he was at small expenses; but besides his bachelor's lodging in the dark court, he had an establishment in the heart of the City, near the Thames, which was intrusted to the care of a maiden sister as covetous and as crafty as himself. At this establishment, ostensibly a pawnbroker's, were received the goods which Cutts knew at his residence in the court were to be sold a bargain, having been obtained for nothing. It was chiefly by this business that the man had enriched himself. But his net was one that took in fishes of all kinds. He was a general adviser to the invaders of law. If he shared in the schemes he advised, they were so sure to be successful that he enjoyed the highest reputation for luck. It was but seldom that he did actively share in those schemes—lucky in what he shunned as in what he performed. He had made no untruthful boast to Mrs. Crane of the skill with which he had kept himself out of the fangs of justice. With a certain portion of the police he was indeed rather a favorite; for was any thing mysteriously "lost," for which the owner would give a reward equal to its value in legal markets, Cutts was the man who would get it back. Of violence he had a wholesome dislike; not that he did not admire force in others—not that he was physically a coward—but that caution was his predominant characteristic. He employed force when required—set a just value on it—would plan a burglary, and dispose of the spoils; but it was only where the prize was great and the danger small that he lent his hand to the work that his brain approved. When Losely proposed to him the robbery of a lone country house, in which Jasper, making light of all perils, brought prominently forward the images of some thousands of pounds in gold and notes, guarded by an elderly gentleman, and to be approached with ease through an uninhabited building—Cutts thought it well worth personal investigation. Nor did he consider himself bound, by his general engagement to Mrs. Crane, to lose the chance of a sum so immeasurably greater than he could expect to obtain from her by revealing the plot and taking measures to frustrate it. Cutts was a most faithful and intelligent agent when he was properly paid, and had proved himself so to Mrs. Crane on various occasions. But then, to be paid *properly* meant a gain greater in serving than he could get in not serving. Hitherto it had been extremely lucrative to obey Mrs. Crane in saving Jasper from crime and danger. In this instance the lucre seemed all the other way. Accordingly, the next morning, having filled a saddle-bag with sundry necessaries, such as files, picklocks, masks—to which he added a choice selection of political tracts and newspapers—he and Jasper set out on two hired but strong and fleet hackneys to the neighborhood of Fawley. They put up at a town on the other side of the Manor House from that by which Jasper had approached it, and at about the same distance. After baiting their steeds, they proceeded to Fawley by the silent guide of a finger-post, gained the vicinity of the park, and Cutts, dismounting, flitted across the turf, and plunged himself into the hollows of the unfinished mansion, while Jasper took charge of the horses in a corner of the wooded lane. Cutts, pleased by the survey of the forlorn interior, ventured, in the stillness that reigned around, to mount the ladder, to apply a picklock to the door above, and opening this with ease, crept into the long gallery, its walls covered with pictures. Through the crevices in another door at the extreme end gleamed a faint light. Cutts applied his eye to the chinks and keyhole, and saw that the light came from a room on the other side the narrow passage which connected the new house with the old. The door of that room was open, candles were on the table, and beside the table Cutts could distinguish the outline of a man's form seated—doubtless the owner; but the form did not seem "elderly." If inferior to Jasper's in physical power, it still was that of vigorous and unbroken manhood. Cutts did not like the appearance of that form, and he retreated to outer air with some misgivings. However, on rejoining Losely, he said, "As yet things look promising—place still as death—only one door locked, and that the common country lock, which a school-boy might pick with his knife."

"Or a crooked nail," said Jasper.

"Ay, no better picklock in good hands. But there are other things besides locks to think of."

Cutts then hurried on to suggest that it was just the hour when some of the workmen employed on the premises might be found in the Fawley public house; that he should ride on, dismount there, and take his chance of picking

up details of useful information as to localities and household. He should represent himself as a commercial traveler on his road to the town they had quitted; he should take out his cheap newspapers and tracts; he should talk politics—all workmen love politics, especially the politics of cheap newspapers and tracts. He would rejoin Losely in an hour or so.

The bravo waited—his horse grazed—the moon came forth, stealing through the trees, bringing into fantastic light the melancholy old dwelling-house—the yet more melancholy new pile. Jasper was not, as we have seen, without certain superstitious fancies, and they had grown on him more of late as his brain had become chronically heated and his nerves relaxed by pain. He began to feel the awe of the silence and the moonlight; and some vague remembrances of earlier guiltless days—of a father's genial love—of joyous sensations in the priceless possession of youth and vigor—of the admiring smiles and cordial hands which his beauty, his daring, and high spirits had attracted toward him—of the all that he had been, mixed with the consciousness of what he was, and an uneasy conjecture of the probable depth of the final fall—came dimly over his thoughts, and seemed like the whispers of remorse. But it is rarely that man continues to lay blame on himself; and Jasper hastened to do as many a better person does without a blush for his folly—viz., shift upon the innocent shoulders of fellowmen, or on the hazy outlines of that clouded form which ancient schools and modern plagiarists call sometimes "Circumstance," sometimes "Chance," sometimes "Fate," all the guilt due to his own willful abuse of irrevocable hours.

With this consolatory creed came, of necessity, the devil's grand luxury, Revenge. Say to yourself, "For what I suffer I condemn another man, or I accuse the Arch-Invisible, be it a Destiny, be it a Maker!" and the logical sequel is to add evil to evil, folly to folly—to retort on the man who so wrongs, or on the Arch-Invisible who so afflicts you. Of all our passions is not Revenge the one into which enters with the most zest a devil? For what is a devil?—A being whose sole work on earth is some revenge on God!

Jasper Losely was not by temperament vindictive; he was irascible, as the vain are—combative, aggressive, turbulent, by the impulse of animal spirits; but the premeditation of vengeance was foreign to a levity and egotism which abjured the self-sacrifice that is equally necessary to hatred as to love. But Guy Darrell had forced into his moral system a passion not native to it. Jasper had expected so much from his marriage with the great man's daughter—counted so thoroughly on her power to obtain pardon and confer wealth—and his disappointment had been so keen—been accompanied with such mortification—that he regarded the man whom he had most injured as the man who had most injured him. But not till now did his angry feelings assume the shape of a definite vengeance. So long as there was a chance that he could extort from Darrell the money that was the essential necessary to his life, he checked his thoughts whenever they suggested a profitless gratification of rage. But now that Darrell had so scornfully and so inexorably spurned all concession—now that nothing was to be wrung from him except by force—force and vengeance came together in his projects. And yet, even in the daring outrage he was meditating, murder itself did not stand out as a thought accepted—no; what pleased his wild and turbid imagination was the idea of humiliating by terror the man who had humbled him by disdain. To penetrate into the home of this haughty scorner—to confront him in his own chamber at the dead of night, man to man, force to force; to say to him, "None now can deliver you from me—I come no more as a suppliant—I command you to accept my terms;" to gloat over the fears which, the strong man felt assured, would bow the rich man to beg for mercy at his feet;—this was the picture which Jasper Losely conjured up; and even the spoil to be won by violence smiled on him less than the grand position which the violence itself would bestow. Are not nine murders out of ten fashioned thus from conception into deed? "Oh that my enemy were but before me face to face—none to part us!" says the vindictive dreamer. Well, and what then? *There* his imagination halts—there he drops the sable curtain; he goes not on to say, "Why, *then* another murder will be added to the long catalogue from Cain." He palters with his deadly wish, and mutters, perhaps, at most, "Why, *then*—come what may."

Losely continued to gaze on the pale walls gleaming through the wintry boughs, as the moon rose high and higher. And now out broke the light from Darrell's lofty casement, and Losely smiled fiercely, and muttered—hark! the very words—"And *then!*—come what may."

Hoofs are now heard on the hard road, and Jasper is joined by his accomplice.

"Well!" said Jasper.

"Mount!" returned Cutts; "I have much to say as we ride."

"This will not do," resumed Cutts, as they sped fast down the lane; "why, you never told me all the drawbacks. There are no less than four men in the house—two servants besides the master and his secretary; and one of those servants, the butler or valet, has fire-arms, and knows how to use them."

"Pshaw!" said Jasper, scoffingly; "is that all? Am I not a match for four?"

"No, it is not all; you told me the master of the house was a retired elderly man, and you mentioned his name. But you never told me that your Mr. Darrell was the famous lawyer and Parliament man—a man about whom the newspapers have been writing the last six months."

"What does that signify?"

"Signify! Just this, that there will be ten times more row about the affair you propose than there would be if it concerned only a stupid old country squire, and therefore ten times as much danger. Besides, on principle, I don't like to have any thing to do with lawyers—a cantankrous, spiteful set of fellows. And this Guy Darrell! Why, General Jas, I have seen the man. He cross-examined me once when I was a witness on a case of fraud, and turned me inside out with as much ease as if I had been an old pin-cushion stuffed with bran. I think I see his eye now, and I would as lief

have a loaded pistol at my head as that eye again fixed on mine."

"Pooh! You have brought a mask; and, besides, *you* need not see him; I can face him alone."

"No, no; there might be murder! I never mix myself with things of that kind, on principle; your plan will not do. There might be a much safer chance of more *swag* in a very different sort of scheme. I hear that the pictures in that ghostly long room I crept through are worth a mint of money. Now pictures of great value are well known, and there are collectors abroad who would pay almost any price for some pictures, and never ask where they came from; hide them for some years, perhaps, and not bring them forth till any tales that would hurt us had died away. This would be safe, I say. If the pictures are small, no one in the old house need be disturbed. I can learn from some of the trade what pictures Darrell really has that would fetch a high price, and then look out for customers abroad. This will take a little time, but be worth waiting for."

"I will not wait," said Jasper, fiercely; "and you are a coward. I have resolved that to-morrow night I will be in that man's room, and that man shall be on his knees before me."

Cutts turned sharply round on his saddle, and by aid of the moonlight surveyed Losely's countenance. "Oh, I see," he said, "there is more than robbery in your mind. You have some feeling of hate—of vengeance; the man has injured you?"

"He has treated me as if I were a dog," said Jasper; "and a dog *can* bite."

Cutts mused a few moments. "I have heard you talk at times about some rich relation or connection on whom you had claims; Darrell is the man, I suppose?"

"He is; and hark ye, Cutts, if you try to balk me here I will wring your neck off. And since I have told you so much, I will tell you this much more—that I don't think there is the danger you count on; for I don't mean to take Darrell's blood, and I believe he would not take mine."

"But there may be a struggle—and then?"

"Ay, if so, and then—man to man," replied Jasper, mutteringly.

Nothing more was said, but both spurred on their horses to a quicker pace. The sparks flashed from the hoofs. Now through the moonlight, now under shade of the boughs, scoured on the riders—Losely's broad chest and marked countenance, once beautiful, now fearful, formidably defined even under the shadows—his comrade's unsubstantial figure and goblin features flitting vague even under the moonlight.

The town they had left came in sight, and by this time Cutts had resolved on the course his prudence suggested to him. The discovery that, in the proposed enterprise, Losely had a personal feeling of revenge to satisfy, had sufficed to decide the accomplice peremptorily to have nothing to do with the affair. It was his rule to abstain from all transactions in which fierce passions were engaged. And the quarrels between relations or connections were especially those which his experience of human nature told him brought risk upon all intermeddlers. But he saw that Jasper was desperate; that the rage of the bravo might be easily turned on himself; and therefore, since it was no use to argue, it would be discreet to dissimulate. Accordingly, when they reached their inn, and were seated over their brandy-and-water, Cutts resumed the conversation, appeared gradually to yield to Jasper's reasonings, concerted with him the whole plan for the next night's operations, and took care meanwhile to pass the brandy. The day had scarcely broken before Cutts was off, with his bag of implements and tracts. He would have fain carried off also both the horses; but the hostler, surly at being knocked up at so early an hour, might not have surrendered the one ridden by Jasper without Jasper's own order to do so. Cutts, however, bade the hostler be sure and tell the gentleman, before going away, that he, Cutts, strongly advised him "to have nothing to do with the bullocks."

Cutts, on arriving in London, went straight to Mrs. Crane's old lodging opposite to Jasper's. But she had now removed to Bodden Place, and left no address. On reaching his own home, Cutts, however, found a note from her, stating that she should be at her old lodging that evening, if he would call at half past nine o'clock; for, indeed, she had been expecting Jasper's promised visit—had learned that he had left his lodgings, and was naturally anxious to learn from Cutts what had become of him. When Cutts called at the appointed hour and told his story, Arabella Crane immediately recognized all the danger which her informant had so prudently shunned. Nor was she comforted by Cutts's assurance that Jasper, on finding himself deserted, would have no option but to abandon, or at least postpone, an enterprise that, undertaken singly, would be too rash even for his reckless temerity. As it had become the object of her life to save Losely from justice, so she now shrunk from denouncing to justice his meditated crime; and the idea of recurring to Colonel Morley happily flashed upon her.

Having thus explained to the reader these antecedents in the narrative, we return to Jasper. He did not rise till late at noon; and as he was generally somewhat stupefied on rising, by the drink he had taken the night before, and by the congested brain which the heaviness of such sleep produced, he could not at first believe that Cutts had altogether abandoned the enterprise—rather thought that, with his habitual wariness, that Ulysses of the Profession had gone forth to collect further information in the neighborhood of the proposed scene of action. He was not fully undeceived in this belief till somewhat late in the day, when, strolling into the stable-yard, the hostler, concluding from the gentleman's goodly thews and size that he was a north-country grazier, delivered Cutts's allegorical caution against the bullocks.

Thus abandoned, Jasper's desperate project only acquired a still more concentrated purpose, and a ruder simplicity of action. His original idea, on first conceiving the plan of robbery, had been to enter into Darrell's presence disguised and masked. Even, however, before Cutts deserted him, the mere hope of plunder had become subordinate to the desire of a personal triumph; and now that Cutts had left him to

himself, and carried away the means of disguise, Jasper felt rather pleased than otherwise at the thought that his design should have none of the characteristics of a vulgar burglary. No mask now; his front should be as open as his demand. Cutts's report of the facility of penetrating into Darrell's very room also lessened the uses of an accomplice. And in the remodification of his first hasty plan of commonplace midnight stealthy robbery, he would no longer even require an assistant to dispose of the plunder he might gain. Darrell should now yield to his exactions, as a garrison surprised accepts the terms of its conqueror. There would be no flight, no hiding, no fear of notes stopped at banks. He would march out, hand on haunch, with those immunities of booty that belong to the honors of war. Pleasing his self-conceit with so gallant a view of his meditated exploit, Jasper sauntered at dark into the town, bought a few long narrow nails and a small hammer, and returning to his room, by the aid of the fire, the tongs, and the hammer, he fashioned these nails, with an ease and quickness which showed an expert practitioner, into instruments that would readily move the wards of any common country-made lock. He did not care for weapons. He trusted at need to his own powerful hands. It was no longer, too, the affair of a robber unknown, unguessed, who might have to fight his way out of an alarmed household. It was but the visit which he, Jasper Losely, Esquire, thought fit to pay, however unceremoniously and unseasonably, to the house of a father-in-law! At the worst, should he fail in finding Darrell, or securing an unwitnessed interview —should he instead alarm the household, it would be a proof of the integrity of his intentions that he had no weapons save those which Nature bestows on the wild man as the mightiest of her wild beasts. At night he mounted his horse, but went out of his way, keeping the high-road for an hour or two, in order to allow ample time for the farmers to have quitted the rent-feast, and the old Manor House to be hushed in sleep. At last, when he judged the coast clear and the hour ripe, he wound back into the lane toward Fawley; and when the spire of its hamlet-church came in sight through the frosty starlit air, he dismounted—led the horse into one of the thick beechwoods, that make the prevailing characteristic of the wild country round that sequestered dwelling-place—fastened the animal to a tree, and stalked toward the park-pales on foot. Lightly, as a wolf enters a sheepfold, he swung himself over the moss-grown fence; he gained the buttresses of the great raw pile; high and clear above, from Darrell's chamber, streamed the light; all the rest of the old house was closed and dark, buried, no doubt, in slumber.

He is now in the hollows of the skeleton pile; he mounts the ladder; the lock of the door before him yields to his rude implements but artful hand. He is in the long gallery; the moonlight comes broad and clear through the large casements. What wealth of art is on the walls! but how profitless to the robber's greed! There, through the very halls which the master had built in the day of his ambition, saying to himself, "These are for far Posterity," the step of Violence, it may be of Murder, takes its stealthy way to the room of the childless man! Through the uncompleted pile, toward the uncompleted life, strides the terrible step.

The last door yields noiselessly. The small wooden corridor, narrow as the drawbridge which in ancient fortresses was swung between the commandant's room in the topmost story and some opposing wall, is before him. And Darrell's own door is half open; lights on the table—logs burning bright on the hearth. Cautiously Losely looked through the aperture. Darrell was not there; the place was solitary: but the opposite door was open also. Losely's fine ear caught the sound of a slight movement of a footstep in the room just below, to which that opposite door admitted. In an instant the robber glided within the chamber—closed and locked the door by which he had entered, retaining the key about his person. The next stride brought him to the hearth. Beside it hung the bell-rope common in old-fashioned houses. Losely looked round; on the table, by the writing implements, lay a pen-knife. In another moment the rope was cut, high out of Darrell's reach, and flung aside. The hearth, being adapted but for logwood fires, furnished not those implements in which, at a moment of need, the owner may find an available weapon —only a slight pair of brass wood-pincers, and a shovel equally frail. Such as they were, however, Jasper quietly removed and hid them behind a heavy old bureau. Steps were now heard mounting the stair that led into the chamber; Losely shrunk back into the recess beside the mantle-piece. Darrell entered, with a book in his hand, for which he had, indeed, quitted his chamber—a volume containing the last Act of Parliament relating to Public Trusts, which had been sent to him by his solicitor; for he is creating a deed of trust, to insure to the nation the Darrell Antiquities, in the name of his father, the antiquarian.

Darrell advanced to the writing-table, which stood in the centre of the room; laid down the book, and sighed—the short, quick, impatient sigh which had become one of his peculiar habits. The robber stole from the recess, and, gliding round to the door by which Darrell had entered, while the back of the master was still toward him, set fast the lock, and appropriated the key as he had done at the door which had admitted himself. Though the noise in that operation was but slight, it rouses Darrell from his abstracted thoughts. He turned quickly, and at the same moment Losely advanced toward him.

At once Darrell comprehended his danger. His rapid glance took in all the precautions by which the intruder proclaimed his lawless purpose—the closed door, the bell-rope cut off. There, between those four secret walls, must pass the interview between himself and the desperado. He was unarmed, but he was not daunted. It was but man to man. Losely had for him his vast physical strength, his penury, despair, and vindictive purpose. Darrell had in his favor the intellect which gives presence of mind; the energy of nerve, which is no more to be seen in the sinew and bone than the fluid which fells can be seen in the jars and the wires; and that superb kind of pride, which, if terror be felt, makes its action impossible, be-

cause a disgrace, and bravery a matter of course, simply because it is honor.

As the bravo approached, by a calm and slight movement Darrell drew to the other side of the table, placing that obstacle between himself and Losely, and, extending his arm, said, "Hold, Sir; I forbid you to advance another step. You are here, no matter how, to reurge your claims on me. Be seated; I will listen to you."

Darrell's composure took Losely so by surprise that, mechanically, he obeyed the command thus tranquilly laid upon him, and sunk into a chair—facing Darrell with a sinister under-look from his sullen brow. "Ah!" he said, "you will listen to me now; but my terms have risen."

Darrell, who had also seated himself, made no answer; but his face was resolute, and his eye watchful. The ruffian resumed, in a gruffer tone, "My terms have risen, Mr. Darrell."

"Have they, Sir? and why?"

"Why! Because no one can come to your aid here; because here you can not escape; because here you are in my power!"

"Rather, Sir, I listen to you because here you are under my roof-tree; and it is you who are in my power!"

"Yours! Look round; the doors are locked on you. Perhaps you think your shouts, your cries, might bring aid to you. Attempt it—raise your voice—and I strangle you with these hands."

"If I do not raise my voice, it is, first, because I should be ashamed of myself if I required aid against one man; and, secondly, because I would not expose to my dependents a would-be assassin in him whom my lost child called husband. Hush, Sir, hush, or your own voice will alarm those who sleep below. And, now, what is it you ask? Be plain, Sir, and be brief."

"Well, if you like to take matters coolly, I have no objection. These are my terms. You have received large sums this day; those sums are in your house, probably in that bureau; and your life is at my will."

"You ask the moneys paid for rent to-day. True, they are in the house; but they are not in my apartments. They were received by another; they are kept by another. In vain, through the windings and passages of this old house, would you seek to find the room in which he stores them. In doing so, you will pass by the door of a servant who sleeps so lightly that the chances are that he will hear you; he is armed with a blunderbuss and with pistols. You say to me, 'Your money or your life.' I say to you, in reply, 'Neither: attempt to seize the money, and your own life is lost.'"

"Miser! I don't believe that sums so large are not in your own keeping. And even if they are not, you shall show me where they are; you shall lead me through those windings and passages of which you so tenderly warn me, my hand on your throat. And if servants wake, or danger threaten me, it is you who shall save me, or die! Ha! you do not fear me—eh, Mr. Darrell!" And Losely rose.

"I do not fear you," replied Darrell, still seated. "I can not conceive that you are here with no other design but a profitless murder. You are here, you say, to make terms; it will be time enough to see whose life is endangered, when all your propositions have been stated. As yet you have only suggested a robbery, to which you ask me to assist you. Impossible! Grant even that you were able to murder me, you would be just as far off from your booty. And yet you say your terms have risen! To me they seem fallen to—nothing! Have you any thing else to say?"

The calmness of Darrell, so supremely displayed in this irony, began to tell upon the ruffian—the magnetism of the great man's eye and voice, and steadfast courage, gradually gaining power over the wild, inferior animal. Trying to recover his constitutional audacity, Jasper said, with a tone of the old rollicking voice, "Well, Mr. Darrell, it is all one to me how I wring from you, in your own house, what you refused me when I was a suppliant on the road. Fair means are pleasanter than foul. I am a gentleman—the grandson of Sir Julian Losely, of Losely Hall; I am your son-in-law; and I am starving. This must not be; write me a check."

Darrell dipped his pen in the ink, and drew the paper toward him.

"Oho! you don't fear me, eh? This is not done from fear, mind—all out of pure love and compassion, my kind father-in-law! You will write me a check for five thousand pounds—come, I am moderate—your life is worth a precious deal more than that. Hand me the check—I will trust to your honor to give me no trouble in cashing it, and bid you good-night, my—father-in-law."

As Losely ceased with a mocking laugh, Darrell sprang up quickly, threw open the small casement which was within his reach, and flung from it the paper on which he had been writing, and which he wrapped round the heavy armorial seal that lay on the table.

Losely bounded toward him. "What means that?—what have you done?"

"Saved your life and mine, Jasper Losely," said Darrell solemnly, and catching the arm that was raised against him. "We are now upon equal terms."

"I understand," growled the tiger, as the slaver gathered to his lips—"you think by that paper to summon some one to your aid."

"Not so—that paper is useless while I live. Look forth—the moonlight is on the roofs below—can you see where that paper has fallen? On the ledge of a parapet that your foot could not reach. It faces the window of a room in which one of my household sleeps; it will meet his eye in the morning when the shutters are unbarred; and on that paper are writ these words, 'If I am this night murdered, the murderer is Jasper Losely,' and the paper is signed by my name. Back, Sir—would you doom yourself to the gibbet?"

Darrell released the dread arm he had arrested, and Losely stared at him, amazed, bewildered.

Darrell resumed: "And now I tell you plainly that I can accede to no terms put to me thus. I can sign my hand to no order that you may dictate, because that would be to sign myself a coward—and my name is Darrell!"

"Down on your knees, proud man—sign you shall, and on your knees! I care not now for

gold—I care not now a rush for my life. I came here to humble the man who from first to last has so scornfully humbled me. And I will, I will! On your knees—on your knees!"

The robber flung himself forward; but Darrell, whose eye had never quitted the foe, was prepared for and eluded the rush. Losely, missing his object, lost his balance, struck against the edge of the table which partially interposed between himself and his prey, and was only saved from falling by the close neighborhood of the wall, on which he came with a shock that for the moment well-nigh stunned him. Meanwhile Darrell had gained the hearth, and snatched from it a large log, half burning. Jasper, recovering himself, dashed the long matted hair from his eyes, and, seeing undismayed the formidable weapon with which he was menaced, cowered for a second and deadlier spring.

"Stay, stay, stay, parricide and madman!" cried Darrell, his eye flashing brighter than the brand. "It is not my life I plead for—it is yours. Remember, if I fall by your hand no hope and no refuge are left to you! In the name of my dead child, and under the eye of avenging Heaven, I strike down the fury that blinds you, and I scare back your soul from the abyss!"

So ineffably grand were the man's look and gesture—so full of sonorous terror the swell of his matchless, all-conquering voice—that Losely, in his midmost rage, stood awed and spell-bound. His breast heaved, his eye fell, his frame collapsed, even his very tongue seemed to cleave to the parched roof of his mouth. Whether the effect so suddenly produced might have continued, or whether the startled miscreant might not have lashed himself into renewed wrath and inexpiable crime, passes out of conjecture. At that instant simultaneously were heard hurried footsteps in the corridor without, violent blows on the door, and voices exclaiming, "Open, open!—Darrell, Darrell!" while the bell at the portals of the old house rang fast and shrill.

"Ho!—is it so?" growled Losely, recovering himself at those unwelcome sounds. "But do not think that I will be caught thus, like a rat in a trap. No—I will—"

"Hist!" interrupted Darrell, dropping the brand, and advancing quickly on the ruffian—"Hist!—let no one know that my daughter's husband came here with a felon's purpose. Sit down—down, I say. It is for my house's honor that you should be safe." And suddenly placing both hands on Losely's broad shoulder he forced him into a seat.

During these few hurried words the strokes at the door and the shouts without had been continued, and the door shook on its yielding hinges.

"The key—the key!" whispered Darrell.

But the bravo was stupefied by the suddenness with which his rage had been cowed, his design baffled, his position changed from the man dictating laws and threatening life to the man protected by his intended victim. And he was so slow in even comprehending the meaning of Darrell's order, that Darrell had scarcely snatched the keys less from his hand than from the pouch to which he at last mechanically pointed, when the door was burst open, and Lionel Haughton, Alban Morley, and the Colonel's servant were in the room. Not one of them, at the first glance, perceived the inmates of the chamber, who were at the right of their entrance, by the angle of the wall and in shadow. But out came Darrell's calm voice—

"Alban! Lionel!—welcome always; but what brings you hither, at such an hour, with such clamor? Armed, too!"

The three men stood petrified. There sate, peaceably enough, a large dark form, its hands on its knees, its head bent down, so that the features were not distinguishable; and over the chair in which this bending figure was thus confusedly gathered up, leaned Guy Darrell, with quiet ease—no trace of fear nor of past danger in his face, which, though very pale, was serene, with a slight smile on the firm lips.

"Well," muttered Alban Morley, slowly lowering his pistol, "well, I am surprised!—yes, for the first time in twenty years, I *am* surprised!"

"Surprised, perhaps, to find me at this hour still up, and with a person upon business—the door locked. However, mutual explanations later. Of course you stay here to-night. My business with this—this visitor is now over. Lionel, open that door—here is the key. Sir (he touched Losely by the shoulder, and whispered in his ear, 'Rise, and speak not!'—(aloud)—Sir, I need not detain you longer. Allow me to show you the way out of this rambling old house."

Jasper rose like one half-asleep, and, still bending his form and hiding his face, followed Darrell down the private stair, through the study, the library, into the hall, the Colonel's servant lighting the way; and Lionel and Morley, still too amazed for words, bringing up the rear. The servant drew the heavy bolts from the front door. And now the household had caught alarm. Mills first appeared with the blunderbuss, then the footman, then Fairthorn.

"Stand back, there!" cried Darrell, and he opened the door himself to Losely. "Sir," said he, then, as they stood in the moonlight, "mark that I told you truly you were in my power; and if the events of this night can lead you to acknowledge a watchful Providence, and recall with a shudder the crime from which you have been saved, why, then, I too, out of gratitude to Heaven, may think of means by which to free others from the peril of your despair."

Losely made no answer, but slunk off with a fast, furtive stride, hastening out of the moonlit sward into the gloom of the leafless trees.

CHAPTER II.

If the Lion ever wear the Fox's hide, still he wears it as the Lion.

When Darrell was alone with Lionel and Alban Morley the calm with which he had before startled them vanished. He poured out his thanks with deep emotion. "Forgive me; not in the presence of a servant could I say, 'You have saved me from an unnatural strife, and my daughter's husband from a murderer's end.' But by what wondrous mercy did you learn my danger? Were you sent to my aid?"

Alban briefly explained. "You may judge," he said, in conclusion, "how great was our anxiety, when, following the instructions of our guide, while our driver rang his alarum at the front portals, we made our entrance into yon ribs of stone, found the doors already opened, and feared we might be too late. But, meanwhile, the poor woman waits without in the carriage that brought us from the station. I must go and relieve her mind."

"And bring her hither," cried Darrell, "to receive my gratitude. Stay, Alban; while you leave me with her you will speak aside to Mills; tell him that you heard there was an attempt to be made on the house, and came to frustrate it, but that your fears were exaggerated; the man was more a half-insane mendicant than a robber. Be sure, at least, that his identity with Losely be not surmised, and bid Mills treat the affair lightly. Public men are exposed, you know, to assaults from crack-brained enthusiasts; or stay—I was once a lawyer, and (continued Darrell, whose irony had become so integral an attribute of his mind as to be proof against all trial) there *are* men so out of their wits as to fancy a lawyer has ruined them! Lionel, tell poor Dick Fairthorn to come to me." When the musician entered, Darrell whispered to him, "Go back to your room—open your casement—step out on to the parapet—you will see something white; it is a scrap of paper wrapped round my old armorial seal. Bring it to me just as it is, Dick. That poor young Lionel, we must keep him here a day or two; mind, no prickles for him, Dick."

CHAPTER III.

Arabella Crane *versus* Guy Darrell; or, Woman *versus* Lawyer. In the Courts, Lawyer would win; but in a Private Parlor, foot to foot and tongue to tongue, Lawyer has not a chance.

Arabella Crane entered the room; Darrell hesitated—the remembrances attached to her were so painful and repugnant. But did he not now owe to her, perhaps, his very life? He passed his hand rapidly over his brow, as if to sweep away all earlier recollections, and, advancing quickly, extended that hand to her. The stern woman shook her head, and rejected the proffered greeting.

"You owe me no thanks," she said, in her harsh, ungracious accents; "I sought to save not you, but him."

"How!" said Darrell, startled; "you feel no resentment against the man who injured and betrayed you?"

"What my feelings may be toward him are not for you to conjecture; man could not conjecture them; I am woman. What they once were I might blush for; what they are now, I could own without shame. But you, Mr. Darrell—you, in the hour of my uttermost anguish, when all my future was laid desolate, and the world lay crushed at my feet—you—man, chivalrous man!—you had for me no human compassion—you thrust me in scorn from your doors—you saw in my woe nothing but my error—you sent me forth, stripped of reputation, branded by your contempt, to famine or to suicide. And you wonder that I feel less resentment against him who wronged me than against you, who, knowing me wronged, only disdained my grief. The answer is plain—the scorn of the man she only reverenced leaves to a woman no memory to mitigate its bitterness and gall. The wrongs inflicted by the man she loved may leave, what they have left to me, an undying sense of a past existence—radiant, joyous, hopeful; of a time when the earth seemed covered with blossoms, just ready to burst into bloom; when the skies through their haze took the rose-hues as the sun seemed about to rise. The memory that I once was happy, at least then, I owe to him who injured and betrayed me. To you, when happiness was lost to me forever, what do I owe? Tell me."

Struck by her words, more by her impressive manner, though not recognizing the plea by which the defendant thus raised herself into the accuser, Darrell answered gently, "Pardon me; this is no moment to revive recollections of anger on my part; but reflect, I entreat you, and you will feel that I was not too harsh. In the same position any other man would not have been less severe."

"Any other man!" she exclaimed; "ay, possibly! but would the scorn of any other man so have crushed self-esteem? The injuries of the wicked do not sour us against the good; but the scoff of the good leaves us malignant against virtue itself. Any other man! Tut! Genius is bound to be indulgent. It should know human errors so well—has, with its large luminous forces, such errors itself when it deigns to be human, that, where others may scorn, genius should only pity." She paused a moment, and then slowly resumed. "And pity was my due. Had you, or had any one lofty as yourself in reputed honor, but said to me, 'Thou hast sinned—thou must suffer; but sin itself needs compassion, and compassion forbids thee to despair'—why, then, I might have been gentler to the things of earth, and less steeled against the influences of Heaven than I have been. That is all—no matter now. Mr. Darrell, I would not part from you with angry and bitter sentiments. Colonel Morley tells me that you have not only let the man, whom we need not name, go free, but that you have guarded the secret of his designs. For this I thank you. I thank you, because what is left of that blasted and deformed existence I have taken into mine. And I would save that man from his own devices as I would save my soul from its own temptations. Are you large-hearted enough to comprehend me? Look in my face—you have seen his; all earthly love is erased and blotted out of both."

Guy Darrell bowed his head in respect that partook of awe.

"You too," said the grim woman, after a pause, and approaching him nearer—"*you*, too, have loved, I am told, and you, too, were forsaken."

He recoiled and shuddered.

"What is left to your heart of its ancient folly? I should like to know! I am curious to learn if there be a man who can feel as woman! Have you only resentment? have you only disdain? have you only vengeance? have you pity? or have you the jealous, absorbing desire, surviving the affection from which it sprang, that still the life wrenched from you shall owe, de-

spite itself, a melancholy allegiance to your own?"

Darrell impatiently waved his hand to forbid further questions; and it needed all his sense of the service this woman had just rendered him, to repress his haughty displeasure at so close an approach to his torturing secrets.

Arabella's dark bright eyes rested on his knitted brow, for a moment, wistfully, musingly. Then she said, "I see! man's inflexible pride—no pardon there! But own, at least, that you have suffered."

"Suffered!" groaned Darrell involuntarily, and pressing his hand to his heart.

"You have! and you own it! Fellow-sufferer, I have no more anger against you. Neither should pity, but let each respect, the other. A few words more—this child!"

"Ay—ay—this child! *you* will be truthful. You will not seek to deceive me—you know that she—she—claimed by that assassin, reared by his convict father—*she* is no daughter of my line!"

"What! would it then be no joy to know that your line did not close with yourself—that your child might—"

"Cease, madam, cease—it matters not to a man nor to a race when it perish, so that it perish at last with honor. Who would have either himself or his lineage live on into a day when the escutcheon is blotted and the name disgraced? No; if that be Matilda's child, tell me, and I will bear, as man may do, the last calamity which the will of Heaven may inflict. If, as I have all reason to think, the tale be an imposture, speak and give me the sole comfort to which I would cling amidst the ruin of all other hopes."

"Verily," said Arabella, with a kind of musing wonder in the tone of her softened voice; "verily, has a man's heart the same throb and fibre as a woman's? Had I a child like that blue-eyed wanderer with the frail form needing protection, and the brave spirit that ennobles softness, what would be my pride! my bliss! Talk of shame—disgrace! Fie—fie—the more the evil of others darkened one so innocent, the more cause to love and shelter her. But *I*—am childless! Shall I tell you that the offense which lies heaviest on my conscience has been my cruelty to that girl? She was given an infant to my care. I saw in her the daughter of that false, false, mean, deceiving friend, who had taken my confidence, and bought, with her supposed heritage, the man sworn by all oaths to me. I saw in her, too, your descendant, your rightful heiress. I rejoiced in a revenge on your daughter and yourself. Think not *I* would have foisted her on your notice! No. I would have kept her without culture, without consciousness of a higher lot; and when I gave her up to her grandsire the convict, it was a triumph to think that Matilda's child would be an outcast. Terrible thought! but I was mad then. But that poor convict whom you, in your worldly arrogance, so loftily despise—*he* took to his breast what was flung away as a worthless weed. And if the flower keep the promise of the bud, never flower so fair bloomed from your vaunted stem! And yet you would bless me, if I said, 'Pass on, childless man; she is nothing to you!'"

"Madam, let us not argue. You are right; man's heart and woman's must each know throbs that never are, and never should be, familiar to the other. I repeat my question, and again I implore your answer."

"I can not answer for certain; and I am fearful of answering at all, lest on a point so important I should mislead you. Matilda's child? Jasper affirmed it to me. His father believed him—I believed him. I never had the shadow of a doubt till—"

"Till what? For Heaven's sake, speak."

"Till about five years ago, or somewhat more, I saw a letter from Gabrielle Desmarets, and—"

"Ah! which made you suspect, as I do, that the child is Gabrielle Desmaret's daughter."

Arabella reared her crest as a serpent before it strikes. "Gabrielle's daughter! You think so. Her child that I sheltered! Her child for whom I have just pleaded to you! *Hers!*" She suddenly became silent. Evidently that idea had never before struck her; evidently it now shocked her; evidently something was passing through her mind which did not allow that idea to be dismissed. As Darrell was about to address her, she exclaimed, abruptly, "No! say no more now. You may hear from me again, should I learn what may decide at least this doubt one way or the other. Farewell, Sir."

"Not yet. Permit me to remind you that you have saved the life of a man whose wealth is immense."

"Mr. Darrell, my wealth in relation to my wants is perhaps immense as yours, for I do not spend what I possess."

"But this unhappy outlaw whom you would save from himself can henceforth be to you but a burden and a charge. After what has passed to-night, I do tremble to think that penury may whisper other bosses to rob, other lives to menace. Let me, then, place at your disposal, to be employed in such mode as you deem the best, whatever may be sufficient to secure an object which we may here have in common."

"No, Mr. Darrell," said Arabella, fiercely; "whatever he be, never with my consent shall Jasper Losely be beholden to you for alms. If money can save him from shame and a dreadful death, that money shall be mine. I have said it. And hark you, Mr. Darrell, what is repentance without atonement? I say not that I repent, but I do know that I seek to atone."

The iron-gray robe fluttered an instant, and then vanished from the room.

When Alban Morley returned to the library he saw Darrell at the farther corner of the room on his knees. Well might Guy Darrell thank Heaven for the mercies vouchsafed to him that night. Life preserved? Is *that* all? Might life yet be bettered and gladdened? Was there aught in the grim woman's words that might bequeath thoughts which reflection would ripen into influences over action? aught that might suggest the cases in which, not ignobly, Pity might subjugate Scorn? In the royal abode of that soul does Pride *only* fortify Honor? is it but the mild king, not the imperial despot? Would it blind, as its rival, the reason? Would it chain, as a rebel, the Heart? Would it mar the dominions that might be serene by the treasures it wastes—by the wars it

provokes? Self-knowledge! self-knowledge! From Heaven, indeed, descends the precept—"KNOW THYSELF." That truth was told to us by the old heathen oracle. But what old heathen oracle has told us *how* to know?

CHAPTER IV.

The Man-eater humiliated. He encounters an old acquaintance in a traveler, who, like Shakspeare's Jaques, is "a melancholy fellow;" who, also, like Jaques, hath "great reason to be sad;" and who, still like Jaques, is "full of matter."

JASPER LOSELY rode slowly on through the clear frosty night; not back to the country town which he had left on his hateful errand, nor into the broad road to London. With a strange desire to avoid the haunts of men, he selected—at each choice of way in the many paths branching right and left, between waste and woodland—the lane that seemed the narrowest and the dimmest. It was not remorse that gnawed him, neither was it the mere mercenary disappointment, nor even the pang of baffled vengeance—it was the profound humiliation of diseased self-love—the conviction that, with all his brute power, he had been powerless in the very time and scene in which he had pictured to himself so complete a triumph. The very quiet with which he had escaped stung him. Capture itself would have been preferable, if capture had been preceded by brawl and strife—the exhibition of his hardihood and prowess. Gloomily bending over his horse's neck, he cursed himself as fool and coward. What would he have had!—a new crime on his soul? Perhaps he would have answered, "Any thing rather than this humiliating failure." He did not rack his brains with conjecturing if Cutts had betrayed him, or by what other mode assistance had been sent in such time of need to Darrell. Nor did he feel that hunger for vengeance, whether on Darrell or on his accomplice (should that accomplice have played the traitor), which might have been expected from his characteristic ferocity. On the contrary, the thought of violence and its excitements had in it a sickness as of shame. Darrell at that hour might have ridden by him scatheless. Cutts might have jeered and said, "I blabbed your secret, and sent the aid that foiled it;" and Losely would have continued to hang his head, nor lifted the Herculean hand that lay nerveless on the horse's mane. Is it not commonly so in all reaction from excitements in which self-love has been keenly galled? Does not vanity enter into the lust of crime as into the desire of fame?

At sunrise Losely found himself on the high road, into which a labyrinth of lanes had led him, and opposite to a mile-stone, by which he learned that he had been long turning his back on the metropolis, and that he was about ten miles distant from the provincial city of Ouzelford. By this time his horse was knocked up, and his own chronic pains began to make themselves acutely felt; so that when, a little farther on, he came to a wayside inn, he was glad to halt; and after a strong dram, which had the effect of an opiate, he betook himself to bed, and slept till the noon was far advanced.

When Losely came down stairs the common room of the inn was occupied by a meeting of the trustees of the high roads; and, on demanding breakfast, he was shown into a small sanded parlor adjoining the kitchen. Two other occupants—a man and a woman—were there already, seated at a table by the fireside, over a pint of half-and-half. Losely, warming himself at the hearth, scarcely noticed these humble revelers by a glance. And they, after a displeased stare at the stalwart frame which obscured the cheering glow they had hitherto monopolized, resumed a muttered conversation; of which, as well as of the *vile modicum* which refreshed their lips, the man took the lion's share. Shabbily forlorn were that man's habiliments—turned and returned, patched, darned, weather-stained, grease-stained—but still retaining that kind of mouldy grandiose, bastard gentility, which implies that the wearer has known better days; and, in the downward progress of fortunes when they once fall, may probably know still worse. The woman was some years older than her companion, and still more forlornly shabby. Her garments seemed literally composed of particles of dust glued together, while her face might have insured her condemnation as a witch before any honest jury in the reign of King James the First. His breakfast, and the brandy bottle that flanked the loaf, were now placed before Losely; and, as distastefully he forced himself to eat, his eye once more glanced toward, and this time rested on, the shabby man, in the sort of interest with which one knave out of elbows regards another. As Jasper thus looked, gradually there stole on him a reminiscence of those coarse large features—that rusty, disreputable wig. The recognition, however, was not mutual; and, presently, after a whisper interchanged between the man and the woman, the latter rose, and approaching Losely, dropped a courtesy, and said, in a weird, under voice, "Stranger, luck's in store for you. Tell your fortune?" As she spoke, from some dust hole in her garments she produced a pack of cards, on whose half-obliterated faces seemed incrusted the dirt of ages. Thrusting these antiquities under Jasper's nose, she added, "Wish and cut."

"Pshaw," said Jasper, who, though sufficiently superstitious in some matters and in regard to some persons, was not so completely under the influence of that imaginative infirmity as to take the creature before him for a sibyl. "Get away; you turn my stomach. Your cards smell; so do you!"

"Forgive her, worthy Sir," said the man, leaning forward. "The hag may be unsavory, but she is wise. The Three Sisters who accosted the Scottish Thane, Sir (Macbeth—you have seen it on the stage?), were not savory. Withered, and wild in their attire, Sir, but they knew a thing or two! She sees luck in your face. Cross her hand, and give it vent!"

"Fiddledee," said the irreverent Losely. "Take her off, or I shall scald her," and he seized the kettle.

The hag retreated grumbling: and Losely, soon dispatching his meal, placed his feet on the hobs, and began to meditate what course to adopt for a temporary subsistence. He had broken into the last pound left of the money which he had extracted from Mrs. Crane's purse

some days before. He recoiled with terror from the thought of returning to town and placing himself at her mercy. Yet what option had he? While thus musing, he turned impatiently round and saw that the shabby man and the dusty hag were engaged in an amicable game of *ecarté*, with those very cards which had so offended his olfactory organs. At that sight the old instinct of the gambler struggled back; and, raising himself up, he looked over the cards of the players. The miserable wretches were, of course, playing for nothing; and Losely saw at a glance that the man was, nevertheless, trying to cheat the woman. Positively he took that man into more respect; and that man, noticing the interest with which Losely surveyed the game, looked up, and said, "While the time, Sir? What say you? A game or two? I can stake my pistoles—that is, Sir, so far as a fourpenny bit goes. If ignorant of this French game, Sir, cribbage or all-fours."

"No," said Losely, mournfully; "there is nothing to be got out of you; otherwise—" He stopped and sighed. "But I have seen you under other circumstances. What has become of your Theatrical Exhibition? Gambled it away? Yet, from what I see of your play, I think you ought not to have lost, Mr. Rugge."

The ex-manager started.

"What! You knew me before the Storm!—before the lightning struck me, as I may say, Sir—and falling into difficulties, I became—a wreck? You knew me?—not of the Company?—a spectator?"

"As you say—a spectator. You had once in your employ an actor—clever old fellow. Waife, I think, he was called."

"Ha! hold! At that name, Sir, my wounds bleed afresh. From that execrable name, Sir, there hangs a tale!"

"Indeed! Then it will be a relief to you to tell it," said Losely, resettling his feet on the hob, and snatching at any diversion from his own reflections.

"Sir, when a gentleman, who is a gentleman, asks, as a favor, a specimen of my powers of recital, not professionally, and has before him the sparkling goblet, which he does not invite me to share, he insults my fallen fortunes. Sir, I am poor—I own it; I have fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, Sir; but I have still in this withered bosom the heart of a Briton!"

"Warm it, Mr. Rugge. Help yourself to the brandy—and the lady too."

"Sir, you are a gentleman; Sir, your health. Hag, drink better days to us both. That woman, Sir, *is* a hag, but she is an honor to her sex—faithful!"

"It is astonishing how faithful ladies are when not what is called beautiful. I speak from painful experience," said Losely, growing debonnair as the liquor relaxed his gloom, and regaining that levity of tongue which sometimes strayed into wit. and which, springing originally from animal spirits and redundant health—still came to him mechanically whenever roused by companionship from alternate intervals of lethargy and pain. "But now, Mr. Rugge, I am all ears; perhaps you will be kind enough to be all tale."

With tragic aspect, unrelaxed by that *jou de mots*, and still wholly unrecognizing in the massive form and discolored swollen countenance of the rough-clad stranger the elegant proportions, the healthful, blooming, showy face, and elaborate fopperies of the Jasper Losely who had sold to him a Phenomenon which proved so evanishing, Rugge entered into a prolix history of his wrongs at the hands of Waife, of Losely, of Sophy. Only of Mrs. Crane did he speak with respect; and Jasper then for the first time learned—and rather with anger for the interference than gratitude for the generosity—that she had repaid the £100, and thereby canceled Rugge's claim upon the child. The ex-manager then proceeded to the narrative of his subsequent misfortunes—all of which he laid to the charge of Waife and the Phenomenon. "Sir," said he, "I was ambitious. From my childhood's hour I dreamed of the great York Theatre—dreamed of it literally thrice. Fatal Vision! But, like other dreams, that dream would have faded—been forgotten in the work-day world—and I should not have fallen into the sere and yellow, but have had, as formerly, troops of friends, and not been reduced to the horrors of poverty and a faithful Hag. But, Sir, when I first took to my bosom that fiend, William Waife, he exhibited a genius, Sir, that Dowton (you have seen Dowton?—grand!) was a stick as compared with. Then my ambition, Sir, blazed and flared up—obstreperous, and my childhood's dream haunted me; and I went about musing—[Hag, you recollect!]—and muttering 'The Royal Theatre at York.' But incredible though it seem, the ungrateful scorpion left me, with a treacherous design to exhibit the parts I had fostered, on the London boards; and even-handed Justice, Sir, returned the poisoned chalice to his lips, causing him to lose an eye and to hobble—besides splitting up his voice—which served him right. And again I took the scorpion for the sake of the Phenomenon. I had a babe myself once, Sir, though you may not think it. Gormerick (that is this faithful Hag) gave the babe Daffy's Elixir, in teething; but it died—convulsions. I comforted myself when that Phenomenon came out on my stage—in pink satin and pearls. 'Ha!' I said, 'the great York Theatre shall yet be mine!' The haunting idea became a Mania, Sir. The learned say that there is a Mania called Money Mania*—when one can think but of the one thing needful—as the guilty Thane saw the dagger, Sir—you understand. And when the Phenomenon had vanished and gone, as I was told, to America, where I now wish I was myself, acting Rolla at New York or elsewhere, to a free and enlightened people—then, Sir, the Mania grew on me still stronger and stronger. There was a pride in it, Sir—a British pride. I said to this faithful Hag—'What—shall I not have the York because that false child has deserted me? Am I not able to realize a Briton's ambition without being beholden to a Phenomenon in spangles?' Sir, I took the York! Alone I did it!"

"And," said Losely, feeling a sort of dreary satisfaction in listening to the grotesque sorrows of one whose condition seemed to him yet more abject than his own—"And the York Theatre alone perhaps did you."

"Right, Sir," said Rugge—half dolorously,

* *Query*—Monomania.

half exultingly. "It was a Grand Concern, and might have done for the Bank of England! It swallowed up my capital with as much ease, Sir, as I could swallow an oyster if there were one upon that plate. I saw how it would be the very first week—when I came out myself, strong—Kean's own part in the *Iron Chest*—Mortimer, Sir; there warn't three pounds ten in the house—packed audience, Sir, and they had the face to hiss me. 'Hag,' said I, to Mrs. Gormerick, 'this Theatre is a howling wilderness.' But there is a fascination in a Grand Concern, of which one is the head—one goes on and on. All the savings of a life devoted to the British Drama and the productions of native genius went in what I may call—a jiffy! But it was no common object, Sir, to your sight displayed—but what with pleasure, Sir (I appeal to the Hag!), Heaven itself surveyed!—a great man struggling, Sir, with the storms of fate, and greatly falling, Sir, with—a sensation! York remembers it to this day! I took the benefit of the Act—it was the only benefit I did take—and nobody was the better for it. But I don't repine—I realized my dream: that is more than all can say. Since then I have had many downs, and no ups. I have been a messenger, Sir—a prompter, Sir, in my own Exhibition—to which my own clown, having married into the tragic line, succeeded, Sir, as proprietor; buying of me, when I took the York, the theatre, scenery, and properties, Sir, with the right still to call himself, 'Rugge's Grand Theatrical Exhibition,' for an old song, Sir—Melancholy. Tyrannized over, Sir—snubbed and bullied by a creature dressed in a little brief authority; and my own tights—scarlet—as worn by me in my own applauded part of 'The Remorseless Baron.' At last, with this one faithful creature, I resolved to burst the chains—to be free as air—in short, a chartered libertine, Sir. We have not much, but, thank the immortal gods, we *are* independent, Sir, the Hag and I, chartered libertines! And we are alive still—at which, in strict confidence, I may own to you that I am astonished."

"Yes! you do live," said Jasper, much interested—for how to live at all was at that moment a matter of considerable doubt to himself; "you do live—it *is* amazing! How?"

"The Faithful tells fortunes; and sometimes we pick up windfalls—widows and elderly single ladies—but it is dangerous. Labor is sweet, Sir; but not hard labor in the dungeons of a Bridewell; she has known that labor, Sir; and in those intervals I missed her much. Don't cry, Hag; I repeat, I live!"

"I understand now; you live upon her! They are the best of creatures, these hags, as you call them, certainly. Well, well, no saying what a man may come to! I suppose you have never seen Waife, nor that fellow you say was so well-dressed and good-looking, and who sold you the Phenomenon, nor the Phenomenon herself—Eh?" added Losely, stretching himself, and yawning, as he saw the brandy bottle was finished.

"I have seen Waife—the one-eyed monster! Aha—I have seen him!—and yesterday too; and a great comfort it was to me too."

"You saw Waife yesterday—where?"

"At Ouzelford, which I and the Faithful left this morning."

"And what was he doing?" said Losely, with well-simulated indifference. "Begging, breaking stones, or what?"

"No," said Rugge, dejectedly; "I can't say it was what, in farcical composition, I should call such nuts to me as that, Sir. Still, he was in a low way—seemed a peddler or hawker, selling out of a pannier on the Rialto—I mean the Corn-market, Sir—not even a hag by his side, only a great dog—French. A British dog would have scorned such fellowship. And he did not look merry, as he used to do when in my troop. Did he, Hag?"

"His conscience smites him," said the Hag, solemnly.

"Did you speak to him?"

"Why, no. I should have liked it, but we could not at that moment, seeing that we were not in our usual state of independence. This faithful creature was being led before the magistrates, and I too—charge of cheating a cook maid, to whom the Hag had only said, 'that if the cards spoke true she would ride in her carriage.' The charge broke down; but we were placed for the night in the Cells of the Inquisition, remanded, and this morning banished from the city, and are now on our way to—any other city; eh, Hag?"

"And the old man was not with the Phenomenon? What has become of her, then?"

"Perhaps she may be with him at his house, if he has one; only she was not with him on the Rialto or Corn-market. She was with him two years ago, I know; and he and she were better off then than he is now, I suspect. And that is why it did me good, Sir, to see him a peddler—a common peddler—fallen into the sere, like the man he abandoned!"

"Humph! where were they two years ago?"

"At a village not far from Humberston. He had a pretty house, Sir, and sold baskets; and the girl was there too, favored by a great lady—a Marchioness, Sir! Gods!"

"Marchioness? — near Humberston? The Marchioness of Montfort, I suppose."

"Likely enough; I don't remember. All I know is, that two years ago my old clown was my tyrannical manager; and he said to me, with a sneer, 'Old Gentleman Waife, whom you used to bully, and his Juliet Araminta, are in clover.' And the mocking varlet went on to say that when he had last visited Humberston, in the race-week, a young tradesman, who was courting the Columbine, whose young idea I myself taught to shoot on the light fantastic toe, treated that Columbine and one of her sister train (being, indeed, her aunt, who has since come out at the Surrey in *Desdemona*) to a picnic in a fine park. (That's discipline!—ha, ha!) And there, Sir, Columbine and her aunt saw Waife on the other side of a stream by which they sate carousing."

"The clown perhaps said it to spite you."

"Columbine herself confirmed his tale, and said that, on returning to the Village Inn for the Triumphal Car (or bus) which brought them, she asked if a Mr. Waife dwelt thereabouts, and was told, 'Yes, with his grand-daughter.' And she went on asking, till all came out as the clown reported. And Columbine had not even the gratitude, the justice, to expose that villain—not even to say he had been my perfidious serv-

ant! She had the face to tell me 'she thought it might harm him, and he was a kind old soul.' Sir, a Columbine whose toes I had rapped scores of times before they could be turned out, was below contempt! but when my own clown thus triumphed over me, in parading before my vision the bloated prosperity of mine enemy, it went to my heart like a knife; and we had words on it, Sir, and—I left him to his fate. But a peddler! Gentleman Waife has come to that! The Heavens are just, Sir, and of our pleasant vices, Sir, make instruments that—that—"

"Scourge us," prompted the Hag, severely.

Losely rang the bell; the maid-servant appeared. "My horse and bill. Well, Mr. Rugge, I must quit your agreeable society. I am not overflowing with wealth at this moment, or I would request your acceptance of—"

"The smallest trifle," interrupted the Hag, with her habitual solemnity of aspect.

Losely, who, in his small way, had all the liberality of a Catiline, "*alieni appetens, sui profusus*, drew forth the few silver coins yet remaining to him; and though he must have calculated that, after paying his bill, there could scarcely be three shillings left, he chucked two of them toward the Hag, who, clutching them with a profound courtesy, then handed them to the fallen monarch by her side, with a loyal tear and a quick sob that might have touched the most cynical republican.

In a few minutes more Losely was again on horseback; and as he rode toward Ouzelford, Rugge and his dusty Faithful shambled on in the opposite direction—shambled on, foot-sore and limping, along the wide, waste, wintry thoroughfare—vanished from the eye, as their fates henceforth from this story. There they go by the white hard mile-stone; farther on, by the trunk of the hedge-row tree, which lies lopped and leafless—cumbering the way-side, till the time come to cast it off to the thronged, dull stack-yard; farther yet, where the ditch widens into yon stagnant pool, with the great dung-heap by its side. There the road turns aslant; the dung-heap hides them. Gone! and not a speck on the Immemorial, Universal Thoroughfare.

CHAPTER V.

No wind so cutting as that which sets in the quarter from which the sun rises.

The town to which I lend the disguising name of Ouzelford, which in years by-gone was represented by Guy Darrell, and which in years to come may preserve in its municipal hall his effigies in canvas or stone, is one of the handsomest in England. As you approach its suburbs from the London Road it rises clear and wide upon your eye, crowning the elevated table-land upon which it is built; a noble range of prospect on either side, rich with hedge-rows not yet sacrificed to the stern demands of modern agriculture—venerable woodlands, and the green pastures round many a rural thane's frank, hospitable hall; no one Great House banishing from leagues of landscape the abodes of knight and squire, nor menacing, with "the legitimate influence of property," the votes of rebellious burghers. Every where, like finger-posts to heaven, you may perceive the church-towers of rural hamlets embosomed in pleasant valleys, or climbing up gentle slopes. At the horizon the blue fantastic outline of girdling hills mingles with the clouds. A famous old cathedral, neighbored by the romantic ivy-grown walls of a ruined castle, soars up from the centre of the town, and dominates the whole survey—calm, as with conscious power. Nearing the town, the villas of merchants and traders, released, perhaps, from business, skirt the road, with trim gardens and shaven lawns. Now the small river, or rather rivulet, of Ouzel, from which the town takes its name, steals out from deep banks covered with brushwood or aged trees, and, widening into brief importance, glides under the arches of an ancient bridge; runs on, clear and shallow, to refresh low fertile dairy-meadows, dotted with kine; and finally quits the view, as brake and copse close round its narrowing, winding way; and that which, under the city bridge, was an imposing noiseless stream, becomes, amidst rustic solitudes, an insignificant babbling brook.

From one of the largest villas in these charming suburbs came forth a gentleman, middle-aged, and of a very mild and prepossessing countenance. A young lady without a bonnet, but a kerchief thrown over her sleek dark hair, accompanied him to the garden-gate, twining both hands affectionately round his arm, and entreating him not to stand in thorough draughts and catch cold, nor to step into puddles and wet his feet, and to be sure to be back before dark, as there were such shocking accounts in the newspapers of persons robbed and garroted even in the most populous highways; and, above all, not to listen to the beggars in the street, and allow himself to be taken in; and before finally releasing him at the gate she buttoned his great-coat up to his chin, thrust two pellets of cotton into his ears, and gave him a parting kiss. Then she watched him tenderly for a minute or so as he strode on with the step of a man who needed not all those fostering admonitions and coddling cares.

As soon as he was out of sight of the lady and the windows of the villa, the gentleman cautiously unbuttoned his great-coat, and removed the cotton from his ears. "She takes much after her mother, does Anna Maria," muttered the gentleman; "and I am very glad she is so well married."

He had not advanced many paces when, from a branch-road to the right that led to the railway station, another gentleman, much younger, and whose dress unequivocally bespoke him a minister of our Church, came suddenly upon him. Each with surprise recognized the other.

"What!—Mr. George Morley!"

"Mr. Hartopp!—How are you, my dear Sir? —What brings you so far from home?"

"I am on a visit to my daughter, Anna Maria. She has not been long married—to young Jessop. Old Jessop is one of the principal merchants at Ouzelford—very respectable, worthy family. The young couple are happily settled in a remarkably snug villa—that is it with the portico, not a hundred yards behind us, to the right. Very handsome town, Ouzelford; you

are bound to it, of course?—we can walk together. I am going to look at the papers in the City Rooms — very fine rooms these are. But you are straight from London, perhaps, and have seen the day's journals? Any report of the Meeting in aid of Ragged Schools?"

"Not that I know of. I have not come from London this morning, nor seen the papers."

"Oh!—there's a strange-looking fellow following us; but perhaps he is your servant?"

"Not so, but my traveling companion—indeed my guide. In fact, I come to Ouzelford in the faint hope of discovering there a poor old friend of mine, of whom I have long been in search."

"Perhaps the Jessops can help you; they know every body at Ouzelford. But now I meet you thus by surprise, Mr. George, I should very much like to ask your advice on a matter which has been much on my mind the last twenty-four hours, and which concerns a person I contrived to discover at Ouzelford, though I certainly was not in search of him — a person about whom you and I had a conversation a few years ago, when you were staying with your worthy father."

"Eh?" said George, quickly; "whom do you speak of?"

"That singular vagabond who took me in, you remember—called himself Chapman—real name William Losely, a returned convict. You would have it that he was innocent, though the man himself had pleaded guilty on his trial."

"His whole character belied his lips, then. Oh, Mr. Hartopp, that man commit the crime imputed to him!—a planned, deliberate robbery—an ungrateful, infamous breach of trust! That man—*that!*—he who rejects the money he does not earn, even when pressed on him by anxious, imploring friends—he who has now gone voluntarily forth, aged and lonely, to wring his bread from the humblest calling rather than incur the risk of injuring the child with whose existence he had charged himself!—*he* a dark midnight thief! Believe him not, though his voice may say it. To screen, perhaps, some other man, he is telling you a noble lie. But what of him? Have you really seen him, and at Ouzelford?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Yesterday. I was in the City Reading-room, looking out of the window. I saw a great white dog in the street below — I knew the dog at once, Sir, though he is disguised by restoration to his natural coat, and his hair is as long as a Peruvian lama's. 'Tis Sir Isaac,' said I to myself; and behind Sir Isaac I saw Chapman, so to call him, carrying a basket with peddler's wares, and, to my surprise, Old Jessop, who is a formal man, with a great deal of reserve and dignity, pompous indeed (but don't let that go farther), talking to Chapman quite affably, and actually buying something out of the basket. Presently Chapman went away, and was soon lost to sight. Jessop comes into the reading-room. 'I saw you,' said I, 'talking to an old fellow with a French dog.' 'Such a good old fellow,' said Jessop; 'has a way about him that gets into your very heart while he is talking. I should like to make you acquainted with him.' 'Thank you for nothing,' said I; 'I should be—taken in.' 'Never fear,' says Jessop, 'he would not take in a fly—the simplest creature.' I own I chuckled at that, Mr. George. 'And does he live here,' said I, 'or is he merely a wandering peddler?' Then Jessop told me that he had seen him for the first time two or three weeks ago, and accosted him rudely, looking on him as a mere tramp; but Chapman answered so well, and showed so many pretty things in his basket, that Jessop soon found himself buying a pair of habit-cuffs for Anna Maria, and in the course of talk it came out, I suppose by a sign, that Chapman was a freemason, and Jessop is an enthusiast in that sort of nonsense, master of a lodge or something, and that was a new attraction. In short, Jessop took a great fancy to him, patronized him, promised him protection, and actually recommended him to a lodging in the cottage of an old widow who lives in the outskirts of the town, and had once been a nurse in the Jessop family. And what do you think Jessop had just bought of this simple creature? A pair of worsted mittens as a present for me; and what is more, I have got them on at this moment—look! neat, I think, and monstrous warm. Now, I have hitherto kept my own counsel. I have not said to Jessop, 'Beware—that is the man who took me in.' But this concealment is a little on my conscience. On the one hand, it seems very cruel, even if the man did once commit a crime, in spite of your charitable convictions to the contrary, that I should be blabbing out his disgrace, and destroying perhaps his livelihood. On the other hand, if he should still be really a rogue, a robber, perhaps dangerous, ought I—ought I—in short—you are a clergyman and a fine scholar, Sir—what ought I to do?"

"My dear Mr. Hartopp, do not vex yourself with this very honorable dilemma of conscience. Let me only find my poor old friend, my benefactor I may call him, and I hope to persuade him, if not to return to the home that waits him, at least to be my guest, or put himself under my care. Do you know the name of the widow with whom he lodges?"

"Yes—Halse; and I know the town well enough to conduct you, if not to the house itself, still to its immediate neighborhood. Pray allow me to accompany you; I should like it very much—for, though you may not think it, from the light way I have been talking of Chapman, I never was so interested in any man, never so charmed by any man; and it has often haunted me at night, thinking that I behaved too harshly to him, and that he was about on the wide world, an outcast, deprived of his little girl, whom he had trusted to me. And I should have run after him yesterday, or called on him this morning, and said 'Let me serve you,' if it had not been for the severity with which he and his son were spoken of, and I myself rebuked for mentioning their very names, by a man whose opinion I, and indeed all the country, must hold in the highest respect—a man of the finest honor, the weightiest character—I mean Guy Darrell, the great Darrell."

George Morley sighed. "I believe Darrell knows nothing of the elder Losely, and is prejudiced against him by the misdeeds of the younger, to whose care you (and I can not blame you, for I also was instrumental to the same

transfer, which might have proved calamitously fatal) surrendered the poor motherless girl."

"She is not with her grandfather now? She lives still, I hope? She was very delicate."

"She lives—she is safe. Ha—take care!"

These last words were spoken as a horseman, riding fast along the road toward the bridge that was now close at hand, came, without warning or heed, so close upon our two pedestrians, that George Morley had but just time to pluck Hartopp aside from the horse's hoofs.

"An impudent, careless, ruffianly fellow, indeed!" said the mild Hartopp, indignantly, as he brushed from his sleeve the splash of dirt which the horseman bequeathed to it. "He must be drunk!"

The rider, gaining the bridge, was there detained at the toll-bar by some carts and wagons, and the two gentlemen passed him on the bridge, looking with some attention at his gloomy, unobservant countenance, and the powerful frame on which, despite coarse garments and the change wrought by years of intemperate excess, was still visible the trace of that felicitous symmetry once so admirably combining Herculean strength with elastic elegance. Entering the town, the rider turned into the yard of the nearest inn. George Morley and Hartopp, followed at a little distance by Morley's traveling companion, Merle, passed on toward the other extremity of the town, and after one or two inquiries for "Widow Halse, Prospect Row," they came to a few detached cottages, very prettily situated on a gentle hill, commanding in front the roofs of the city and the gleaming windows of the great cathedral, with somewhat large gardens in the rear. Mrs. Halse's dwelling was at the extreme end of this Row. The house, however, was shut up; and a woman, who was standing at the door of the neighboring cottage, plaiting straw, informed the visitors that Mrs. Halse was gone out "charing" for the day, and that her lodger, who had his own key, seldom returned before dark, but that at that hour he was pretty sure to be found in the Corn-market or the streets in its vicinity, and offered to send her little boy to discover and "fetch" him. George consulted apart with Merle, and decided on dispatching the cobbler, with the boy for his guide, in quest of the peddler, Merle being of course instructed not to let out by whom he was accompanied, lest Waife, in his obstinacy, should rather abscond than encounter the friends from whom he had fled. Merle, and a curly-headed urchin, who seemed delighted at the idea of hunting up Sir Isaac and Sir Isaac's master, set forth and were soon out of sight. Hartopp and George opened the little garden-gate, and strolled into the garden at the back of the cottage, to seat themselves patiently on a bench beneath an old apple-tree. Here they waited and conversed some minutes, till George observed that one of the casements on that side of the cottage was left open, and, involuntarily rising, he looked in; surveying with interest the room, which, he felt sure at the first glance, must be that occupied by his self-exiled friend: a neat, pleasant little room—a bull-finch in a wicker cage on a ledge within the casement—a flower-pot beside it. Doubtless the window, which faced the southern sun, had been left open by the kind old man in order to cheer the bird and to gladden the plant. Waife's well-known pipe, and a tobacco-pouch worked for him by Sophy's fairy fingers, lay on a table near the fire-place, between casement and door; and George saw with emotion the Bible which he himself had given to the wanderer lying also on the table, with the magnifying-glass which Waife had of late been obliged to employ in reading. Waife's habitual neatness was visible in the aspect of the room. To George it was evident that the very chairs had been arranged by his hand; that his hand had courteously given that fresh coat of varnish to the wretched portrait of a man in blue coat and buff waistcoat, representing, no doubt, the lamented spouse of the hospitable widow. George beckoned to Hartopp to come also and look within; and as the worthy trader peeped over his shoulder, the clergyman said, whisperingly, "Is there not something about a man's home which attests his character?—No 'pleading guilty' here!"

Hartopp was about to answer, when they heard the key turn sharply in the outer door, and had scarcely time to draw somewhat back from the casement when Waife came hurriedly into the room, followed, not by Merle, but by the tall rough-looking horseman whom they had encountered on the road. "Thank Heaven," cried Waife, sinking on a chair, "out of sight, out of hearing now! Now you may speak; now I can listen! Oh, wretched son of my lost angel, whom I so vainly sought to save by the sacrifice of all my claims to the respect of men, for what purpose do you seek me? I have nothing left that you can take away! Is it the child again? See—see—look round—search the house if you will—she is not here."

"Bear with me, if you can, Sir," said Jasper, in tones that were almost meek; "you, at least, can say nothing that I will not bear. But I am in my right when I ask you to tell me, without equivocation or reserve, if Sophy, though not actually within these walls, be near you, in this town or its neighborhood?—in short, still under your protection?"

"Not in this town—not near it—not under my protection; I swear."

"Do not swear, father; I have no belief in other men's oaths. I believe your simple word. Now comes my second question—remember I am still strictly in my right—where is she?—and under whose care?"

"I will not say. One reason why I have abandoned the very air she breathes, was, that you might not trace her in tracing me. But she is out of your power again to kidnap and to sell. You might molest, harass, shame her, by proclaiming yourself her father; but regain her into your keeping, cast her to infamy and vice—never, never! She is now with no powerless, miserable convict, for whom Law has no respect. She is now no helpless infant, without a choice, without a will. She is safe from all save the wanton unprofitable effort to disgrace her. Oh, Jasper, Jasper, be human—she is so delicate of frame—she is so sensitive to reproach, so tremulously alive to honor—I—*I* am not fit to be near her now. I have been a tricksome, shifty vagrant, and innocent though I be, the felon's brand is on me! But you, you too, who never loved her, who can not miss her, whose heart is not breaking at her loss as mine is now—you,

you—to rise up from the reeking pesthouse in which you have dwelt by choice, and say, 'Descend from God's day with me'—Jasper, Jasper, you will not—you can not; it would be the malignity of a devil!"

"Father, hold!" cried Jasper, writhing and livid; "I owe to you more than I do to that thing of pink and white. I know better than you the trumpery of all those waxen dolls of whom dupes make idols. At each turn of the street you may find them in basketfuls—blue-eyed or black-eyed, just the same worthless frippery or senseless toys; but every man dandling his own doll, whether he call it sweet-heart or daughter, makes the same puling boast that he has an angel of purity in his puppet of wax. Nay, hear me! to that girl I owe nothing. You know what I owe to you. You bid me not seek her, and say, 'I am your father!' Do you think it does not misbecome me more, and can it wound you less, when I come to you, and remind you that I am your son!"

"Jasper!" faltered the old man, turning his face aside, for the touch of feeling toward himself, contrasting the cynicism with which Jasper spoke of other ties not less sacred, took the father by surprise.

"And," continued Jasper, "remembering how you once loved me—with what self-sacrifice you proved that love, it is with a bitter grudge against that girl that I see her thus take that place in your affection which was mine—and you so indignant against me if I even presume to approach her. What! I have the malignity of a devil because I would not quietly lie down in yonder kennels to starve, or sink into the grade of those whom your daintier thief disdains; spies into unguarded areas, or cowardly skulkers by blind walls; while in the paltry girl, who you say is so well provided for, I see the last and sole resource which may prevent you from being still more degraded, still more afflicted by your son."

"What is it you want? Even if Sophy were in your power, Darrell would not be more disposed to enrich or relieve you. He will never believe your tale, nor deign even to look into its proofs."

"He might at last," said Jasper, evasively. "Surely with all that wealth, no nearer heir than a remote kinsman in the son of a beggared spendthrift by a linen-draper's daughter—he should need a grandchild more than you do. Yet the proofs you speak of convinced yourself; *you* believe my tale."

"Believe—yes, for that belief was every thing in the world to me! Ah, remember how joyously, when my term of sentence expired, I hastened to seek you at Paris, deceived by the rare letters with which you had deigned to cheer me—fondly dreaming that, in expiating your crime, I should have my reward in your redemption—should live to see you honored, honest, good—live to think your mother watched us from heaven with a smile on both—and that we should both join her at last—you purified by my atonement! Oh, and when I saw you so sunken, so hardened, exulting in vice as in a glory—bravo and partner in a gambler's hell—or, worse still, living on the plunder of miserable women, even the almsman of that vile Desmarets—my son, my son, my lost Lizzy's son blotted out of my world forever!—then, then I should have died if you had not said, boasting of the lie which had wrung the gold from Darrell, 'But the child lives still.' Believed you—oh yes, yes!—for in that belief something was still left to me to cherish, to love, to live for!"

Here the old man's hurried voice died away in a passionate sob; and the direful son, all reprobate though he was, slid from his chair, and bowed himself at his father's knee, covering his face with fell hands that trembled. "Sir, Sir," he said, in broken, reverential accents, "do not let me see you weep. You can not believe me, but I say solemnly that, if there be in me a single remnant of affection for any human being, it is for you. When I consented to leave you to bear the sentence which should have fallen on myself, sure I am that I was less basely selfish than absurdly vain. I fancied myself so born to good fortune!—so formed to captivate some rich girl!—and that you would return to share wealth with me; that the evening of your days would be happy; that you would be repaid by my splendor for your own disgrace! And when I did marry, and did ultimately get from the father-in-law who spurned me the capital of his daughter's fortune, pitifully small though it was compared to my expectations, my first idea was to send half of that sum to you. But—but—I was living with those who thought nothing so silly as a good intention—nothing so bad as a good action. That mocking she-devil, Gabrielle, too! Then the witch's spell of that d—d green table! Luck against one—wait! double the capital ere you send the half. Luck with one—how balk the tide? how fritter the capital just at the turn of doubling? Soon it grew irksome even to think of you; yet still, when I did, I said, 'Life is long; I shall win riches; he shall share them some day or other!'—*Basta, basta!*—what idle twaddle or hollow brag all this must seem to you!"

"No," said Waife, feebly—and his hand drooped till it touched Jasper's bended shoulder, but, at the touch, recoiled as with an electric spasm.

"So, as you say, you found me at Paris. I told you where I had placed the child, not conceiving that Arabella would part with her, or you desire to hamper yourself with an encumbrance—nay, I took for granted that you would find a home, as before, with some old friend or country cousin; but fancying that your occasional visits to her might comfort you, since it seemed to please you so much when I said she lived. Thus we parted—you, it seems, only anxious to save that child from ever falling into my hands or those of Gabrielle Desmarets; I hastening to forget all but the riotous life round me, till—"

"Till you came back to England to rob from me the smile of the only face that I knew would never wear contempt, and to tell the good man with whom I thought she had so safe a shelter that I was a convicted robber, by whose very love her infancy was sullied. Oh Jasper! Jasper!"

"I never said that—never thought of saying it. Arabella Crane did so, with the reckless woman-will, to gain her object. But I did take the child from you. Why? Partly because I needed money so much that I would have sold a hecatomb of children for half what I was of-

fered to bind the girl to a service that could not be very dreadful, since yourself had first placed her there—and partly because you had shrunk, it seems, from appealing to old friends; you were living, like myself, from hand to mouth; what could that child be to you but a drag and a bother?"

"And you will tell me, I suppose," said Waife, with an incredulous bitter irony, that seemed to wither himself in venting it, so did his whole frame recoil and shrink—"you will tell me that it was from the same considerate tenderness that you would have again filched her from me some months later, to place her with that 'she-devil' who was once more by your side, to be reared and sold to—oh horror! —horror! — unimaginable horror! —that pure, helpless infant!—you, armed with the name of father!—you, strong in that mighty form of man!"

"What do you mean? Oh, I remember now! When Gabrielle was in London, and I had seen you on the Bridge. Who could have told you that I meant to get the child from you at that time?"

Waife was silent. He could not betray Arabella Crane; and Jasper looked perplexed and thoughtful. Then gradually the dreadful nature of his father's accusing word seemed to become more clear to him; and he cried, with a fierce start and a swarthy flush, "But whoever told you that I harbored the design that it whitens your lip to hint at, lied, and foully. Harkye, Sir! many years ago Gabrielle had made acquaintance with Darrell, under another name, as Matilda's friend (long story now—not worth telling); he had never, I believe, discovered the imposture. Just at the time you refer to, I heard that Darrell had been to France, inquiring himself into facts connected with my former story that Matilda's child was dead. That very inquiry seemed to show that he had not been so incredulous of my assertions of Sophy's claims on him as he had affected to be when I urged them. He then went on into Italy. Talking this over with Gabrielle, she suggested that, if the child could be got into her possession, she would go with her in search of Darrell, resuming the name in which she had before known him—resuming the title and privilege of Matilda's friend. In that character he might listen to her when he would not to me. She might confirm my statement—melt his heart—coax him into terms. She was the cleverest creature! I should have sold Sophy, it is true. For what? A provision to place me above want and crime. Sold her to whom? To the man who would see in her his daughter's child—rear her to inherit his wealth—guard her as his own honor. What! was this the design that so shocks you? *Basta—basta!* Again, I say Enough! I never thought I should be so soft as to mutter excuses for what I have done. And if I do so now, the words seem forced from me against my will—forced from me, as if in seeing you I was again but a wild, lawless, willful boy, who grieved to see you saddened by his faults, though he forgot his grief the moment you were out of sight."

"Oh Jasper," cried Waife, now fairly placing his hand on Jasper's guilty head, and fixing his bright soft eye, swimming in tears, on that downcast, gloomy face, "you repent! you repent! Yes; call back your BOYHOOD! call it back! Let it stand before you, now, visible, palpable! Lo! I see it! Do not you? Fearless, joyous Image! Wild, lawless, willful, as you say! Wild from exuberant life; lawless as a bird is free, because air is boundless to untried, exulting wings; willful from the ease with which the bravery and beauty of Nature's radiant Darling forced way for each jocund whim through our yielding hearts! Silence! It is there! I see it, as I saw it rise in the empty air when guilt and ignominy first darkened round you; and my heart cried aloud, 'Not on him, not on him—not on that glorious shape of hope and promise—on me, whose life, useless hitherto, has lost all promise now—on me let fall the shame!' And my lips obeyed my heart, and I said, 'Let the laws' will be done—I am the guilty man!' Cruel—cruel one! Was that sunny Boyhood then so long departed from you? On the verge of youth, and such maturity in craft and fraud—that when you stole into my room that dark winter eve, threw yourself at my feet, spoke but of thoughtless debts, and the fears that you should be thrust from an industrious honest calling, and I—I said—'No, no; fear not; the head of your firm likes you; he has written to me; I am trying already to raise the money you need; it shall be raised, no matter what it cost me; you shall be saved; my Lizzy's son shall never know the soil of a prison; shun temptation henceforth; be but honest, and I shall be repaid!' What! even *then* you you were coldly meditating the crime that will make my very grave dishonored!"

"Meditating—not so! How could I? Not till after what had thus passed between us, when you spoke with such indulgent kindness, did I even know that I might more than save myself—by moneys—not raised at risk and loss to you! Remember, you had left me in the inner room, while you went forth to speak with Gunston. There I overheard him talk of notes he had never counted, and might never miss; describe the very place where they were kept; and then the idea came to me irresistibly; 'better rob him than despoil my own generous father.' Sir, I am not pretending to be better than I was. I was not quite the novice you supposed. Coveting pleasures or shows not within my reach, I had shrunk from draining you to supply the means; I had not had the same forbearance for the superfluous wealth of others. I had learned with what simple tools old locks may fly open; and none had ever suspected me, so I had no fear of danger, small need of premeditation; a nail on your mantlepiece, the cloven end of the hammer lying beside, to crook it when hot from the fire that blazed before me! I say this to show you that I did not come provided; nothing was planned beforehand; all was the project and work of the moment. Such was my haste, I burned myself to the bone with the red iron—feeling no pain, or rather, at that age, bearing all pain without wincing. Before Gunston left you my whole plan was then arranged—my sole instrument fashioned. You groan. But how could I fancy that there would be detection? How imagine that, even if moneys never counted *were* missed, suspicion could fall on you—a better gentleman

than he whom you served? And had it not been for that accursed cloak which you so fondly wrapped round me, when I set off to catch the night-train back to ——; if it had not been, I say, for that cloak, there could have been no evidence to criminate either you or me—except that unlucky £5 note, which I pressed on you when we met at ——, where I was to hide till you had settled with my duns. And why did I press it on you?—because you had asked me if I had wherewithal about me on which to live meanwhile; and I, to save you from emptying your own purse, said, 'Yes;' showed you some gold, and pressed on you the bank-note, which I said I could not want—to go, in small part, toward my debts; it was a childish, inconsistent wish to please you; and you seemed so pleased to take it as a proof that I cared for you."

"For me!—no, no; for honor—for honor—for honor! I thought you cared for honor; and the proof of that care was, thrusting into these credulous hands the share of your midnight plunder!"

"Sir," resumed Jasper, persisting in the same startling combination of feeling, gentler and more reverential than could have been supposed to linger in his breast, and of the moral obtuseness that could not, save by vanishing glimpses, distinguish between crime and its consequences—between dishonor and detection—"Sir, I declare that I never conceived that I was exposing you to danger; nay, I meant, out of the money I had taken, to replace to you what you were about to raise, as soon as I could invent some plausible story of having earned it honestly. Stupid notions and clumsy schemes, as I now look back on them; but, as you say, I had not long left boyhood, and fancying myself deep and knowing, was raw in the craft I had practiced. *Basta! basta! basta!*"

Jasper, who had risen from his knees while speaking, here stamped heavily on the floor, as if with anger at the heart-stricken aspect of his silenced father; and continued with a voice that seemed struggling to regain its old imperious, rollicking, burly swell.

"What is done can not be undone. Fling it aside, Sir—look to the future; you with your peddler's pack, I with my empty pockets! What can save you from the workhouse—me from the hulks or gibbet? I know not unless the persons sheltering that girl will buy me off by some provision which may be shared between us. Tell me, then, where she is; leave me to deal in the business as I best may. Pooh! why so scared? I will neither terrify nor kidnap her. I will shuffle off the crust of blackguard that has hardened round me. I will be sleek and smooth, as if I were still the exquisite Lothario—copied by would-be rufflers, and spoiled by willing beauties. Oh, I can still play the gentleman, at least for an hour or two, if it be worth my while. Come, Sir, come; trust me; out with the secret of this hidden maiden, whose interests should surely weigh not more with you than those of a starving son. What, you will not? Be it so. I suspect that I know where to look for her—on what noble thresholds to set my daring foot; what fair lady, mindful of former days—of girlish friendship—of virgin love—wraps in compassionate luxury Guy Darrell's rejected heiress! Ah, your looks tell me that I am hot on the scent. That fair lady I knew of old; she is rich—I helped to make her so. She owes me something. I will call and remind her of it. And—tut, Sir, tut—you shall not go to the workhouse, nor I to the hulks."

Here the old man, hitherto seated, rose—slowly, with feebleness and effort—till he gained his full height; then age, infirmity, and weakness seemed to vanish. In the erect head, the broad massive chest, in the whole presence there was dignity—there was power.

"Hark to me, unhappy reprobate, and heed me well! To save that child from the breath of disgrace—to place her in what you yourself assured me were her rights amidst those in whose dwellings I lost the privilege to dwell when I took to myself your awful burden—I thought to resign her charge forever in this world. Think not that I will fly her now, when you invade. No—since my prayers will not move you—since my sacrifice to you has been so fruitless—since my absence from herself does not attain its end; there, where you find her, shall you again meet me! And if there we meet, and you come with the intent to destroy her peace and blast her fortune, then I, William Losely, am no more the felon. In the face of day I will proclaim the truth, and say, 'Robber, change place in earth's scorn with me; stand in the dock, where thy father stood in vain to save thee!'"

"Bah, Sir—too late now; who would listen to you?"

"All who have once known me—all will listen. Friends of power and station will take up my cause. There will be fresh inquiry into facts that I held back—evidence that, in pleading guilty, I suppressed—ungrateful one—to ward away suspicion from you."

"Say what you will," said Jasper, swaying his massive form to and fro, with a rolling gesture which spoke of cold defiance, "I am no hypocrite in fair repute whom such threats would frighten. If you choose to thwart me in what I always held my last resource for meat and drink, I must stand in the dock even, perhaps, on a heavier charge than one so stale. Each for himself; do your worst—what does it matter?"

"What does it matter that a father should accuse his son! No, no—son, son, son—this must not be!—Let it not be!—let me complete my martyrdom! I ask no reversal of man's decree, except before the Divine Tribunal. Jasper, Jasper—child of my love, spare the sole thing left to fill up the chasms in the heart that you laid waste. Speak not of starving, or of fresh crime. Stay—share this refuge! I WILL WORK FOR BOTH!"

Once more, and this time thoroughly, Jasper's hideous levity and coarse bravado gave way before the lingering human sentiment knitting him back to childhood, which the sight and voice of his injured father had called forth with spasms and throes, as a seer calls the long-buried from a grave. And as the old man extended his arms pleadingly toward him, Jasper, with a gasping sound—half groan, half sob—sprang forward, caught both the hands in his own strong grasp, lifted them to his lips, kissed them, and then, gaining the door with a rapid stride, said, in hoarse broken tones, "Share

your refuge! no—no—I should break your heart downright did you see me daily—hourly as I am! You work for both!—you—you!" His voice stopped, choked for a brief moment, then hurried on: "As for that girl—you—you—you are—but no matter, I will try to obey you—will try to wrestle against hunger, despair, and thoughts that whisper sinking men with devil's tongues. I will try—I will try; if I succeed not, keep your threat—accuse me—give me up to justice—clear yourself; but if you would crush me more than by the heaviest curse, never again speak to me with such dreadful tenderness! Cling not to me, old man; release me, I say; there—there—off. Ah! I did not hurt you? Brute that I am—you bless me—you—you! And I dare not bless again! Let me go—let me go—let me go!" He wrenched himself away from his father's clasp—drowning with loud tone his father's pathetic soothings—out of the house—down the hill—lost to sight in the shades of the falling eve.

CHAPTER VI.

Gentleman Waife does not forget an old friend. The old friend reconciles Astrology to Prudence, and is under the influence of Benefics. Mr. Hartopp hat in hand to Gentleman Waife.

Waife fell on the floor of his threshold, exclaiming, sobbing, moaning, as voice itself gradually died away. The dog, who had been shut out from the house, and remained ears erect, head drooping, close at the door, rushed in as Jasper burst forth. The two listeners at the open casement now stole round; there was the dog, its paw on the old man's shoulder, trying to attract his notice, and whining low.

Tenderly—reverentially, they lift the poor martyr—evermore cleared in their eyes from stain, from question; the dishonoring brand transmuted into the hallowing cross! And when the old man at length recovered consciousness, his head was pillowed on the breast of the spotless, noble preacher; and the decorous English trader, with instinctive deference for repute and respect for law, was kneeling by his side, clasping his hand; and as Waife glanced down, confusedly wondering, Hartopp exclaimed, half sobbing, "Forgive me; you said I should repent if I knew all! I do repent! I do! Forgive me—I shall never forgive myself."

"Have I been dreaming? What is all this? You here, too, Mr. George! But—but there was Another. Gone! ah—gone—gone! lost, lost! Ha! did you overhear us?"

"We overheard you—at that window! See, spite of yourself, Heaven lets your innocence be known, and in that innocence your sublime self-sacrifice."

"Hush! you will never betray me, either of you—never! A father turn against his son!—horrible!"

Again he seemed on the point of swooning. In a few moments more his mind began evidently to wander somewhat; and just as Merle (who, with his urchin-guide, had wandered vainly over the whole town in search of the peddler, until told that he had been seen in a by-street, stopped and accosted by a tall man in a rough great-coat, and then hurrying off, followed by the stranger)—came back to report his ill success, Hartopp and George had led Waife up stairs into his sleeping-room, laid him down on his bed, and were standing beside him watching his troubled face, and whispering to each other in alarm.

Waife overheard Hartopp proposing to go in search of medical assistance, and exclaimed, piteously, "No, that would scare me to death. No doctors—no eaves-droppers. Leave me to myself—quiet and darkness; I shall be well to-morrow."

George drew the curtains round the bed, and Waife caught him by the arm. "You will not let out what you heard, I know; you understand how little I can now care for men's judgments; but how dreadful it would be to undo all I have done—I to be witness against my Lizzy's child! I—I! I trust you—dear, dear Mr. Morley; make Mr. Hartopp sensible that, if he would not drive me mad, not a syllable of what he heard must go forth—'twould be base in him."

"Nay!" said Hartopp, whispering also through the dark—"Don't fear me; I will hold my peace, though 'tis very hard not to tell Williams, at least, that you did not take me in. But you shall be obeyed."

They drew away Merle, who was wondering what the whispered talk was about, catching a word or two here and there, and left the old man not quite to solitude—Waife's hand, in quitting George's grasp, dropped on the dog's head.

Hartopp went back to his daughter's home in a state of great excitement, drinking more wine than usual at dinner, talking more magisterially than he had ever been known to talk, railing quite misanthropically against the world; observing that Williams had become insufferably overbearing, and should be pensioned off: in short, casting the whole family into the greatest perplexity to guess what had come to the mild man. Merle found himself a lodging, and cast a horary scheme as to what would happen to Waife and himself for the next three months, and found all the aspects so perversely contradictory, that he owned he was no wiser as to the future than he was before the scheme was cast. George Morley remained in the Cottage, stealing up, from time to time, to Waife's room, but not fatiguing him with talk. Before midnight the old man slept, but his slumber was much perturbed, as if by fearful dreams. However, he rose early, very weak, but free from fever, and in full possession of his reason. To George's delight, Waife's first words to him then were expressive of a wish to return to Sophy. "He had dreamed," he said, "that he had heard her voice calling out to him to come to her help." He would not revert to the scene with Jasper. George once ventured to touch on that reminiscence, but the old man's look became so imploring that he desisted. Nevertheless, it was evident to the Pastor that Waife's desire of return was induced by his belief that he had become necessary to Sophy's protection. Jasper, whose remorse would probably be very short-lived, had clearly discovered Sophy's residence, and as clearly Waife, and Waife alone, still retained some hold over his rugged breast. Perhaps,

too, the old man had no longer the same dread of encountering Jasper; rather, perhaps, a faint hope that, in another meeting, he might more availingly soften his son's heart. He was not only willing, then—he was eager to depart, and either regained or assumed much of his old cheerfulness in settling with his hostess, and parting with Merle, on whom he forced his latest savings, and the tasteful contents of his panier. Then he took aside George, and whispered in his ear, "A very honest, kind-hearted man, Sir; can you deliver him from the Planets!—they bring him into sad trouble. Is there no opening for a cobbler at Humberston?"

George nodded, and went back to Merle, who was wiping his eyes with his coat-sleeve. "My good friend," said the scholar, "do me two favors besides the greater one you have already bestowed in conducting me back to a revered friend. First, let me buy of you the contents of that basket; I have children among whom I would divide them as heir-looms; next, as we were traveling thither, you told me that, in your younger days, ere you took to a craft which does not seem to have prospered, you were brought up to country pursuits, and knew all about cows and sheep, their cure and their maladies. Well, I have a few acres of glebe-land on my own hands, not enough for a bailiff—too much for my gardener—and a pretty cottage, which once belonged to a schoolmaster, but we have built him a larger one; it is now vacant, and at your service. Come and take all trouble of land and stock off my hands; we shall not quarrel about the salary. But, hark-ye, my friend—on one proviso—give up the Crystal, and leave the Stars to mind their own business."

"Please your Reverence," said Merle, who, at the earlier part of the address, had evinced the most grateful emotion, but who, at the proviso which closed it, jerked himself up, dignified and displeased, "Please your Reverence, no! Kit Merle is not so unnatral as to swop away his Significator at Birth for a mess of porritch! There was that forrin chap, Gally-Leo—he stuck to the stars, or the sun, which is the same thing—and the stars stuck by him, and brought him honor and glory, though the Parsons war dead agin him. He had Malefics in his Ninth House, which belongs to Parsons."

"Can't the matter be compromised, dear Mr. George?" said Waife, persuasively. "Suppose Merle promises to keep his crystal and astrological schemes to himself, or at least only talk of them to you; they can't hurt you, I should think, Sir? And science is a sacred thing, Merle; and the Chaldees, who were the great star-gazers, never degraded themselves by showing off to the vulgar. Mr. George, who is a scholar, will convince you of that fact."

"Content," said George. "So long as Mr. Merle will leave my children and servants, and the parish generally, in happy ignorance of the future, I give him the fullest leave to discuss his science with myself whenever we chat together on summer noons or in winter evenings; and perhaps I may—"

"Be converted?" said Waife, with a twinkling gleam of the playful Humor which had ever sported along his thorny way by the side of Sorrow.

"I did not mean that," said the Parson, smiling; "rather the contrary. What say you, Merle? Is it not a bargain?"

"Sir—God bless you!" cried Merle, simply; "I see you won't let me stand in my own light. And what Gentleman Waife says as to the vulgar, is uncommon true."

This matter settled, and Merle's future secured in a way that his stars, or his version of their language, had not foretold to him, George and Waife walked on to the station, Merle following with the Parson's small carpet-bag, and Sir Isaac charged with Waife's bundle. They had not gone many yards before they met Hartopp, who was indeed on his way to Prospect Row. He was vexed at learning Waife was about to leave so abruptly; he had set his heart on coaxing him to return to Gatesboro' with himself—astounding Williams and Mrs. H., and proclaiming to Market Place and High Street, that, in deeming Mr. Chapman a good and a great man disguised, he, Josiah Hartopp, had not been taken in. He consoled himself a little for Waife's refusal of this kind invitation and unexpected departure, by walking proudly beside him to the station, finding it thronged with passengers—some of them great burgesses of Ouzelford—in whose presence he kept bowing his head to Waife with every word he uttered; and, calling the guard—who was no stranger to his own name and importance—he told him pompously to be particularly attentive to that elderly gentleman, and see that he and his companion had a carriage to themselves all the way, and that Sir Isaac had a particularly comfortable box. "A very great man," he said, with his finger to his lip, "only he will not have it known—just at present." The guard stares, and promises all deference—opens the door of a central first-class carriage—assures Waife that he and his friend shall not be disturbed by other passengers. The train heaves into movement—Hartopp runs on by its side along the stand—his hat off—kissing his hand; then, as the convoy shoots under you dark tunnel, and is lost to sight, he turns back, and seeing Merle, says to him, "You know that gentleman—the old one?"

"Yes, a many year."

"Ever heard any thing against him?"

"Yes, once—at Gatesboro'."

"At Gatesboro'!—ah! and you did not believe it?"

"Only jist for a moment—transiting."

"I envy you," said Hartopp; and he went off with a sigh.

CHAPTER VII.

Jasper Losely in his Element. O young Reader, whosoever thou art, on whom Nature has bestowed her magnificent gift of physical power with the joys it commands, with the daring that springs from it—on closing this chapter, pause a moment and think—"What wilt thou do with it?" Shall it be brute-like or God-like? With what advantage for life—its delights or its perils—toils borne with ease, and glories cheap bought—dost thou start at life's onset? Give thy sinews a Mind that conceives the Heroic, and what noble things thou mayst do! But value thy sinews for rude Strength alone, and that strength may be turned to thy shame and thy torture. The Wealth of thy life will but tempt to its Waste. Abuse, at first felt not, will poison the uses of Sense. Wild bulls

gore and trample their foes. Thou hast Soul! Wilt thou trample and gore it?

Jasper Losely, on quitting his father, spent his last coins in payment for his horse's food, and on fiery drink for himself. In haste he mounted—in haste he spurred on to London; not even pence for the toll-bars. Where he found the gates open, he dashed through them headlong; where closed, as the night advanced, he forced his horse across the fields, over hedge and ditch—more than once the animal falling with him—more than once thrown from the saddle; for, while a most daring, he was not a very practiced rider; but it was not easy to break bones so strong, and though bruised and dizzy he continued his fierce way. At morning his horse was thoroughly exhausted, and at the first village he reached after sunrise he left the poor beast at an inn, and succeeded in borrowing of the landlord £1 on the pawn of the horse thus left as hostage. Resolved to husband this sum he performed the rest of his journey on foot. He reached London at night, and went straight to Cutts's lodging. Cutts was, however, in the club-room of those dark associates against whom Losely had been warned. Oblivious of his solemn promise to Arabella, Jasper startled the revelers as he stalked into the room, and toward the chair of honor at the far end of it, on which he had been accustomed to lord it over the fell groups he had treated out of Poole's purse. One of the biggest and most redoubted of the Black Family was now in that seat of dignity, and, refusing surlily to yield it at Jasper's rude summons, was seized by the scuff of the neck, and literally hurled on the table in front, coming down with clatter and crash among mugs and glasses. Jasper seated himself coolly, while the hubbub began to swell —and roared for drink. An old man, who served as drawer to these cavaliers, went out to obey the order; and when he was gone, those near the door swung across it a heavy bar. Wrath against the domineering intruder was gathering, and waited but the moment to explode. Jasper, turning round his bloodshot eyes, saw Cutts within a few chairs of him, seeking to shrink out of sight.

"Cutts, come hither!" cried he, imperiously.

Cutts did not stir.

"Throw me that cur this way—you who sit next him!"

"Don't, don't; his mad fit is on him; he will murder me—murder me, who have helped and saved you all so often. Stand by me!"

"We will," said both his neighbors, the one groping for his case-knife, the other for his revolver.

"Do you fear I should lop your ears, dog!" cried Jasper, "for shrinking from my side with your tail between your legs. Pooh! I scorn to waste force on a thing so small. After all, I am glad you left me; I did not want you. You will find your horse at an inn in the village of ——. I will pay for its hire whenever we meet again. Meanwhile, find another master—I discharge you. *Mille tonnères!* why does that weasel-faced snail not bring me the brandy? By your leave," and he appropriated to himself the brimming glass of his next neighbor. Thus refreshed, he glanced round through the reek of tobacco smoke; saw the man he had dislodged, and who, rather amazed than stunned by his fall, had kept silence on rising, and was now ominously interchanging muttered words with two of his comrades, who were also on their legs. Jasper turned from him contemptuously; with increasing contempt in his hard, fierce sneer, noted the lowering frowns on either side the Pandemonium; and it was only with an angry flash from his eyes that he marked, on closing his survey, the bar dropped across the door, and two forms, knife in hand, stationed at the threshold.

"Aha! my jolly companions," said he, then, "you do right to bar the door. Prudent families can't settle their quarrels too snugly among themselves. I am come here on purpose to give you all a proper scolding; and if some of you don't hang your heads for shame before I have done, you'll die more game than I think for, whenever you come to the last Drop!"

He rose as he thus spoke, folding his sinewy arms across his wide chest. Most of the men had risen too—some, however, remained seated. There might be eighteen or twenty men in all. Every eye was fixed on him, and many a hand was on a deadly weapon.

"Scum of the earth!" burst forth Jasper, with voice like a roll of thunder, "I stooped to come among you—I shared among you my money. Was any one of you too poor to pay up his club fee—to buy a draught of Forgetfulness—I said, 'Brother, take!' Did brawl break out in your jollities—were knives drawn—a throat in danger—this right hand struck down the uproar, crushed back the coward murder. If I did not join in your rogueries, it was because they were sneaking and pitiful. I came as your Patron, not as your Pal; I did not meddle with your secrets—did not touch your plunder. I owed you nothing. Offal that you are! to me you owed drink, and meat, and good-fellowship. I gave you mirth, and I gave you Law; and in return ye laid a plot among you to get rid of me—how, ye white-livered scoundrels? Oho! not by those fists, and knives, and bludgeons. All your pigeon breasts clubbed together had not manhood for that. But to palm off upon me some dastardly deed of your own, by snares and scraps of false evidence—false oaths, too, no doubt—to smuggle me off to the hangman. That was your precious contrivance. Once again I am here; but this once only. What for?—why, to laugh at, and spit at, and spurn you. And if one man among you has in him an ounce of man's blood, let him show me the traitors who planned that pitiful project, and be they a dozen, they shall carry the mark of this hand till their carcasses go to the surgeon's scalpel."

He ceased. Though each was now hustling the other toward him, and the whole pack of miscreants was closing up, like hounds round a wild boar at bay, the only one who gave audible tongue was that thin splinter of life called Cutts!

"Look you, General Jas, it was all a mistake your ever coming here. You were a fine fellow once, particularly in the French way of doing business—large prizes and lots of row. That don't suit us; we are quiet Englishmen. You brag of beating and bullying the gentlemen who admit you among them, and of not

sharing their plans or risks; but that sort of thing is quite out of order—no precedent for it. How do we know that you are not a spy, or could not be made one, since you say you owe us nothing, and hold us in such scorn? Truth is, we are all sick of you. You say you only come this once: very well, you have spun your yarn—now go. That's all we want; go in peace, and never trouble us again. Gentlemen, I move that General Jas be expelled this club, and requested to withdraw."

"I second it," said the man whom Jasper had flung on the table.

"Those who are in favor of the resolution hold up their hands; all—carried unanimously. General Jas is expelled."

"Expel me!" said Jasper, who, in the mean while, swaying to and fro his brawny bulk, had cleared the space round him, and stood resting his hands on the heavy arm-chair from which he had risen.

A hostile and simultaneous movement of the group brought four or five of the foremost on him. Up rose the chair on which Jasper had leaned—up it rose in his right hand, and two of the assailants fell as falls an ox to the butcher's blow. With his left hand he wrenched a knife from a third of the foes, and thus armed with blade and buckler, he sprang on the table, towering over all. Before him was the man with the revolver, a genteeler outlaw than the rest—ticket-of-leave man, who had been transported for forgery. "Shall I shoot him?" whispered this knave to Cutts. Cutts drew back the hesitating arm. "No; the noise! bludgeons safer." Pounce, as Cutts whispered—pounce as a hawk on its quarry, darted Jasper's swoop on the Forger, and the next moment, flinging the chair in the faces of those who were now swarming up the table, Jasper was armed with the revolver, which he had clutched from its startled owner, and its six barrels threatened death, right and left, beside and before and around him, as he turned from face to face. Instantly there fell a hush—instantly the assault paused. Every one felt that there no faltering would make the hand tremble or the ball swerve. Wherever Jasper turned the foes recoiled. He laughed with audacious mockery as he surveyed the recreants.

"Down with your arms, each of you—down that knife, down that bludgeon! That's well. Down yours—there; yours—yours. What, all down! Pile them here on the table at my feet. Dogs, what do you fear?—death? The first who refuses dies."

Mute and servile as a repentant Legion to a Cæsar's order, the knaves piled their weapons.

"Unbar the door, you two. You, orator Cutts, go in front; light a candle; open the street-door. So—so—so. Who will treat me with a parting cup—to your healths? Thank you, Sir. Fall back there; stand back—along the wall—each of you. Line my way. Ho, ho!—*you* harm me—*you* daunt me—you—you! Stop—I have a resolution to propose. Hear it, and cheer. 'That this meeting rescinds the resolution for the expulsion of General Jasper, and entreats him humbly to remain, the pride and ornament of the club!' Those who are for that resolution, hold up their hands—as many as are against it, theirs. Carried unanimously. Gentlemen, I thank you—proudest day of my life—but I'll see you hanged first; and till that sight diverts me—gentlemen, your health!"

Descending from his eminence, he passed slowly down the room unscathed, unmenaced, and, with a low mocking bow at the threshold, strode along the passage to the street-door. There, seeing Cutts with the light in his hand, he uncocked the pistol, striking off the caps, and giving it to his quondam associate, said, "Return that to its owner, with my compliments. One word—speak truth, and fear nothing. Did you send help to Darrell?"

"No; I swear it."

"I am sorry for it. I should like to have owed so trusty a friend that one favor. Go back to your pals. Understand now why I scorned to work with such rotten tools."

"A wonderful fellow, indeed!" muttered Cutts, as his eye followed the receding form of the triumphant bravo. "All London might look to itself if he had more solid brains and less liquid fire in them."

CHAPTER VIII.

Jasper Losely sleeps under the portico from which Falsehood was borne by Black Horses. He forgets a promise, reweaves a scheme, visits a river side; and a door closes on the Strong Man and the Grim Woman.

Jasper had satisfied the wild yearnings of his wounded vanity. He had vindicated his claim to hardihood and address, which it seemed to him he had forfeited in his interview with Darrell. With crest erect and a positive sense of elation, of animal joy that predominated over hunger, fatigue, remorse, he strided on—he knew not whither. He would not go back to his former lodgings; they were too familiarly known to the set which he had just flung from him, with a vague resolve to abjure henceforth all accomplices, and trust to himself alone. The hour was now late—the streets deserted—the air bitingly cold. Must he at last resign himself to the loathed dictation of Arabella Crane? Well, he now preferred even that to humbling himself to Darrell, after what had passed. Darrell's parting words had certainly implied that he would not be as obdurate to entreaty as he had shown himself to threats. But Jasper was in no humor to entreat. Mechanically he continued to stride on toward the solitary district in which Arabella held her home; but the night was now so far advanced that he shrunk from disturbing the grim woman at that hour—almost as respectfully afraid of her dark eye and stern voice as the outlaws he had quitted were of his own crushing hand and leveled pistol. So, finding himself in one of the large squares of Bloomsbury, he gathered himself up under the sheltering porch of a spacious mansion, unconscious that it was the very residence which Darrell had once occupied, and that from that portico the Black Horses had borne away the mother of his wife. In a few minutes he was fast asleep—sleeping with such heavy, deathlike soundness, that the policeman passing him on his beat, after one or two vain attempts to rouse him, was seized with a rare compassion, and suffered the weary outcast to slumber on.

When Jasper woke at last in the gray dawn,

he felt a strange numbness in his limbs; it was even with difficulty that he could lift himself up. This sensation gradually wearing off, was followed by a quick tingling down the arms to the tips of the fingers. A gloomy noise rang in his ears, like the boom of funeral church-bells; and the pavement seemed to be sliding from under him. Little heeding these symptoms, which he ascribed to cold and want of food, and rather agreeably surprised not to feel the gnaw of his accustomed pains, Jasper now betook himself to Podden Place. The house was still unclosed; and it was not till Jasper's knock had been pretty often repeated that the bolts were withdrawn from the door and Bridgett Greggs appeared. "Oh, it is you, Mr. Losely," she said, with much sullenness, but with no apparent surprise. "Mistress thought you would come while she was away; and I'm to get you the bedroom you had, over the stationer's, six years ago, if you like it. You are to take your meals here, and have the best of every thing; that's mistress's orders."

"Oh, Mrs. Crane is out of town," said Jasper, much relieved; "where has she gone?"

"I don't know."

"When will she be back?"

"In a few days; so she told me. Will you walk in and have breakfast? Mistress said there was to be always plenty in the house—you might come any moment. Please scrape your feet."

Jasper heavily mounted into the drawing-room, and impatiently waited the substantial refreshments which were soon placed before him. The room looked unaltered, as if he had left it but the day before—the prim book-shelves—the empty bird-cage—the broken lute—the patent easy-chair—the footstool—the sofa, which had been added to the original furniture for his express comfort, in the days when he was first adopted as a son—nay, on the hearth-rug the very slippers, on the back of the chair the very dressing-gown, graciously worn by him while yet the fairness of his form justified his fond respect for it.

For that day he was contented with the negative luxury of complete repose; the more so as, in every attempt to move, he felt the same numbness of limb as that with which he had woke, accompanied by a kind of painful weight at the back of the head, and at the junction which the great seat of intelligence forms at the spine with the great mainspring of force; and, withal, a reluctance to stir, and a more than usual inclination to doze. But the next day, though these unpleasant sensations continued, his impatience of thought and hate of solitude made him anxious to go forth and seek some distraction. No distraction left to him but the gambling-table—no companions but fellow-victims in that sucking whirlpool. Well, he knew a low gaming-house, open all day as all night. Wishing to add somewhat to the miserable remains of the £1 borrowed on the horse, that made all his capital, he asked Bridgett, indifferently, to oblige him with two or three sovereigns; if she had them not, she might borrow them in the neighborhood till her mistress returned. Bridgett answered, with ill-simulated glee, that her mistress had given positive orders that Mr. Losely was to have every thing he called for except — money. Jasper colored with wrath and shame; but he said no more—whistled—took his hat—went out—repaired to the gaming-house—lost his last shilling, and returned moodily to dine in Podden Place. The austerity of the room, the loneliness of the evening, began now to inspire him with unmitigated disgust, which was added in fresh account to his old score of repugnance for the absent Arabella. The affront put upon him in the orders which Bridgett had so faithfully repeated, made him yet more distastefully contemplate the dire necessity of falling under the rigid despotism of this determined guardian: it was like going back to a preparatory school, to be mulcted of pocket-money, and set in a dark corner! But what other resource? None but appeal to Darrell—still more intolerable; except —he paused in his cogitation, shook his head, muttered "No, no." But that "except" *would* return! Except to forget his father's prayer and his own promise—except to hunt out Sophy, and extract from the generosity, compassion, or fear of her protectress, some such conditions as he would have wrung from Darrell. He had no doubt now that the girl was with Lady Montfort; he felt that, if she really loved Sophy, and were sheltering her from any tender recollection, whether of Matilda or of Darrell himself, he might much more easily work on the delicate nerves of a woman, shrinking from all noise and scandal, than he could on the stubborn pride of his resolute father-in-law. Perhaps it was on account of Sophy—perhaps to plead for her—that Lady Montfort had gone to Fawley; perhaps the grief visible on that lady's countenance, as he caught so hasty a glimpse of it, might be occasioned by the failure of her mission. If so, there might be now some breach or dissension between her and Darrell, which might render the Marchioness still more accessible to his demands. As for his father—if Jasper played his cards well and luckily, his father might never know of his disobedience; he might coax or frighten Lady Montfort into secrecy. It might be quite unnecessary for him even to see Sophy; if she caught sight of him, she would surely no more recognize his altered features than Rugge had done. These thoughts gathered on him stronger and stronger all the evening, and grew into resolves with the next morning. He sallied out after breakfast—the same numbness; but he walked it off. Easy enough to find the address of the Marchioness of Montfort. He asked it boldly of the porter at the well-known house of the present Lord, and, on learning it, proceeded at once to Richmond — on foot, and thence to the small, scattered hamlet immediately contiguous to Lady Montfort's villa. Here he found two or three idle boatmen lounging near the river side; and entering into conversation with them about their craft, which was sufficiently familiar to him, for he had plied the strongest oar on that tide in the holidays of his youth, he proceeded to inquiries, which were readily and unsuspectingly answered. "Yes, there *was* a young lady with Lady Montfort; they did not know her name. They had seen her often in the lawn—seen her, too, at church. She was very pretty; yes, she had blue eyes and fair hair." Of his father he only heard that "there had been an old gentleman such as he described—lame,

and with one eye—who had lived some months ago in a cottage on Lady Montfort's grounds. They heard he had gone away. He had made baskets—they did not know if for sale; if so, perhaps for a charity. They supposed he was a gentleman, for they had heard he was some relation to the young lady. But Lady Montfort's head coachman lived in the village, and could, no doubt, give him all the information he required." Jasper was too wary to call on the coachman; he had learned enough for the present. Had he prosecuted his researches farther, he might only have exposed himself to questions, and to the chance of his inquiries being repeated to Lady Montfort by one of her servants, and thus setting her on her guard; for no doubt his father had cautioned her against him. It never occurred to him that the old man could already have returned; and those to whom he confined his interrogatories were quite ignorant of that fact. Jasper had no intention to intrude himself that day on Lady Montfort. His self-love shrank from presenting himself to a lady of such rank, and to whom he had been once presented on equal terms, as the bridegroom of her friend and the confidential visitor to her mother, in habiliments that bespoke so utter a fall. Better, too, on all accounts, to appear something of a gentleman; more likely to excite pity for suffering—less likely to suggest excuse for rebutting his claims, and showing him to the door. Nay, indeed, so dressed, in that villainous pea-jacket, and with all other habiliments to match, would any servant admit him?—could he get into Lady Montfort's presence? He must go back—wait for Mrs. Crane's return. Doubtless she would hail his wish—half a reform in itself—to cast off the outward signs of an accepted degradation.

Accordingly he went back to town in much better spirits, and so absorbed in his hopes, that, when he arrived at Podden Place, he did not observe that, from some obliquity of vision, or want of the normal correspondence between will and muscle, his hand twice missed the knocker—wandering first above, then below it; and that, when actually in his clasp, he did not feel the solid iron: the sense of touch seemed suspended. Bridgett appeared. "Mistress is come back, and will see you."

Jasper did not look charmed; he winced, but screwed up his courage, and mounted the stairs—slowly—heavily. From the landing-place above glared down the dark shining eyes that had almost quailed his bold spirit nearly six years before; and almost in the same words as then, a voice as exulting, but less stern, said, "So you come at last to me, Jasper Losely—you are come!" Rapidly—flittingly, with a step noiseless as a spectre's, Arabella Crane descended the stairs; but she did not, as when he first sought that house in years before, grasp his hand or gaze into his face. Rather, it was with a shrinking avoidance of his touch—with something like a shudder—that she glided by him into the open drawing-room, beckoning to him to follow. He halted a moment; he felt a longing to retreat—to fly the house; his superstitious awe of her very benefits came back to him more strongly than ever. But her help at the moment was necessary to his very hope to escape all future need of her, and, though with a vague foreboding of unconjecturable evil, he stepped into the room, and the door closed on both.

BOOK XI.

CHAPTER I.

"The course of true love never does run smooth!" May it not be because where there are no obstacles, there are no tests to the truth of Love? Where the course is smooth, the stream is crowded with pleasure-boats. Where the wave swells, and the shoals threaten, and the sky lowers, the pleasure-boats have gone back into harbor. Ships fitted for rough weather are those built and stored for long voyage.

I PASS over the joyous meeting between Waife and Sophy. I pass over George's account to his fair cousin of the scene he and Hartopp had witnessed, in which Waife's innocence had been manifested, and his reasons for accepting the penalties of guilt had been explained. The first few agitated days following Waife's return have rolled away. He is resettled in the cottage from which he had fled; he refuses, as before, to take up his abode at Lady Montfort's house. But Sophy has been almost constantly his companion, and Lady Montfort herself has spent hours with him each day—sometimes in his rustic parlor, sometimes in the small garden-plot round his cottage, to which his rambles are confined. George has gone back to his home and duties at Humberston, promising very soon to revisit his old friend and discuss future plans.

The scholar, though with a sharp pang, conceding to Waife that all attempt publicly to clear his good name at the cost of reversing the sacrifice he had made, must be forborne, could not, however, be induced to pledge himself to unconditional silence. George felt that there were at least some others to whom the knowledge of Waife's innocence was imperatively due.

Waife is seated by his open window. It is noon; there is sunshine in the pale blue skies—an unusual softness in the wintry air. His Bible lies on the table beside him. He has just set his mark in the page, and reverently closed the Book. He is alone. Lady Montfort—who, since her return from Fawley, has been suffering from a kind of hectic fever, accompanied by a languor that made even the walk to Waife's cottage a fatigue, which the sweetness of her kindly nature enabled her to overcome, and would not permit her to confess—has been so much worse that morning as to be unable to

leave her room. Sophy has gone to see her. Waife is now leaning his face upon his hand, and that face is sadder and more disquieted than it had been, perhaps, in all his wanderings. His darling Sophy is evidently unhappy. Her sorrow had not been visible during the first two or three days of his return, chased away by the joy of seeing him—the excitement of tender reproach and question—of tears that seemed as joyous as the silvery laugh which responded to the gayety that sported round the depth of feeling with which he himself beheld her once more clinging to his side, or seated, with upward loving eyes, on the footstool by his knees. Even at the first look, however, he had found her altered; her cheek was thinner, her color paled. That might be from fretting for him. She would be herself again, now that her tender anxiety was relieved. But she did not become herself again. The arch and playful Sophy he had left was gone, as if never to return. He marked that her step, once so bounding, had become slow and spiritless. Often when she sate near him, seemingly reading or at her work, he noticed that her eyes were not on the page—that the work stopped abruptly in listless hands; and then he would hear her sigh—a heavy but short impatient sigh! No mistaking that sigh by those who have studied grief: Whether in maid or man, in young or old, in the gentle Sophy, so new to life, or in the haughty Darrell, weary of the world, and shrinking from its honors, that sigh had the same character, a like symptom of a malady in common: the same effort to free the heart from an oppressive load; the same token of a sharp and rankling remembrance lodged deep in that finest nerve-work of being, which no anodyne can reach—a pain that comes without apparent cause, and is sought to be expelled without conscious effort.

The old man feared at first that she might, by some means or other, in his absence, have become apprised of the brand on his own name, the verdict that had blackened his repute, the sentence that had hurled him from his native sphere; or that, as her reason had insensibly matured, she, herself, reflecting on all the mystery that surrounded him—his incognitos, his hidings, the incongruity between his social grade and his education or bearing, and his repeated acknowledgments that there were charges against him which compelled him to concealment, and from which he could not be cleared on earth; that she, reflecting on all these evidences to his disfavor, had either secretly admitted into her breast a conviction of his guilt, or that, as she grew up to woman, she had felt, through him, the disgrace entailed upon herself. Or if such were not the cause of her sadness, had she learned more of her father's evil courses; had any emissary of Jasper's worked upon her sensibilities or her fears? No, that could not be the case, since whatever the grounds upon which Jasper had conjectured that Sophy was with Lady Montfort, the accuracy of his conjectures had evidently been doubted by Jasper himself; or why so earnestly have questioned Waife? Had she learned that she was the grandchild and natural heiress of a man wealthy and renowned—a chief among the chiefs of England—who rejected her with disdain? Was she pining for true position? or mortified by the contempt of a kinsman, whose rank so contrasted the vagrancy of the grandsire by whom alone she was acknowledged?

Tormented by these doubts, he was unable to solve them by such guarded and delicate questions as he addressed to Sophy herself. For she, when he falteringly asked what ailed his darling, would start, brighten up for the moment, answer—"Nothing, now that he had come back;" kiss his forehead, play with Sir Isaac, and then manage furtively to glide away.

But the day before that in which we now see him alone, he had asked her abruptly, "if, during his absence, any one besides George Morley had visited at Lady Montfort's—any one whom she had seen?" And Sophy's cheek had as suddenly become crimson, then deadly pale; and first she said "No," and then "Yes;" and after a pause, looking away from him, she added—"The young gentleman who—who helped us to buy Sir Isaac, he has visited Lady Montfort—related to some dear friend of hers."

"What, the painter?"

"No—the other, with the dark eyes."

"Haughton!" said Waife, with an expression of great pain in his face.

"Yes—Mr. Haughton; but he has not been here a long, long time. He will not come again, I believe."

Her voice quivered, despite herself, at the last words, and she began to bustle about the room—filled Waife's pipe, thrust it into his hands with a laugh, the false mirth of which went to his very heart, and then stepped from the open window into the little garden, and began to sing one of Waife's favorite simple old Border songs; but before she got through the first line the song ceased, and she was as lost to sight as a ring-dove, whose note comes and goes so quickly among the impenetrable coverts.

But Waife had heard enough to justify profound alarm for Sophy's peace of mind, and to waken in his own heart some of its most painful associations. The reader, who knows the wrong inflicted on William Losely by Lionel Haughton's father—a wrong which had led to all poor Willy's subsequent misfortunes—may conceive that the very name of Haughton was wounding to his ear; and when, in his brief, sole, and bitter interview with Darrell, the latter had dropped out that Lionel Haughton, however distant of kin, would be a more grateful heir than the grandchild of a convicted felon—if Willy's sweet nature *could* have admitted a momentary hate—it would have been for the thus vaunted son of the man who had stripped him of the modest all which would perhaps have saved his own child from the robber's guilt, and himself from the robber's doom. Long since, therefore, the reader will have comprehended why, when Waife came to meet Sophy at the river-side, and learned at the inn on its margin that the name of her younger companion was Lionel Haughton—why, I say, he had so morosely parted from the boy, and so imperiously bade Sophy to dismiss all thought of meeting "the pretty young gentleman" again.

And now again this very Lionel Haughton to have stolen into the retreat in which poor Waife had deemed he left his treasure so secure! Was it for this he had fled from her? Did he return

to find her youth blighted, her affections robbed from him, by the son of Charles Haughton? The father had despoiled his manhood of independence; must it be the son who despoiled his age of its only solace? Grant even that Lionel was worthy of Sophy—grant that she had been loyally wooed—must not that attachment be fruitless—be fatal? If Lionel were really now adopted by Darrell, Waife knew human nature too well to believe that Darrell would complacently hear Lionel ask a wife in her whose claim to his lineage had so galled and incensed him. It was while plunged in these torturing reflections that Lady Montfort (not many minutes after Sophy's song had ceased and her form vanished) had come to visit him, and he at once accosted her with agitated inquiries—"When had Mr. Haughton first presented himself?—how often had he seen Sophy?—what had passed between them?—did not Lady Montfort see that his darling's heart was breaking?"

But he stopped as suddenly as he had rushed into this thorny maze of questions; for, looking imploringly into Caroline Montfort's face, he saw there more settled signs of a breaking heart than Sophy had yet betrayed, despite her paleness and her sighs. Sad, indeed, the change in her countenance since he had left the place months ago, though Waife, absorbed in Sophy, had not much remarked it till now, when seeking to read therein secrets that concerned his darling's welfare. Lady Montfort's beauty was so perfect in that rare harmony of feature which poets, before Byron, have compared to music, that sorrow could no more mar the effect of that beauty on the eye than pathos can mar the effect of the music that admits it on the ear. But the change in her face seemed that of a sorrow which has lost all earthly hope. Waife therefore checked questions that took the tone of reproaches, and involuntarily murmured, "Pardon."

Then Caroline Montfort told him all the tender projects she had conceived for his grandchild's happiness—how, finding Lionel so disinterested and noble, she had imagined she saw in him the providential agent to place Sophy in the position to which Waife had desired to raise her; Lionel to share with her the heritage of which he might otherwise despoil her—both to become the united source of joy and of pride to the childless man who now favored the one to exclude the other. Nor in these schemes had the absent wanderer been forgotten. No; could Sophy's virtues once be recognized by Darrell, and her alleged birth acknowledged by him—could the guardian who, in fostering those virtues to bloom by Darrell's hearth, had laid under the deepest obligations one who, if unforgiving to treachery, was grateful for the humblest service—could that guardian justify the belief in his innocence which George Morley had ever entertained, and, as it now proved, with reason—then where on all earth a man like Guy Darrell to vindicate William Losely's attainted honor, or from whom William Losely might accept cherishing friendship and independent ease, with so indisputable a right to both! Such had been the picture that the fond and sanguine imagination of Caroline Montfort had drawn from generous hope, and colored with tender fancies. But alas for such castles in the air! All had failed. She had only herself to blame. Instead of securing Sophy's welfare she had endangered Sophy's happiness. They whom she had desired to unite were irrevocably separated. Bitterly she accused herself—her error in relying so much on Lionel's influence with Darrell—on her own early remembrance of Darrell's affectionate nature, and singular sympathies with the young—and thus suffering Lionel and Sophy to grow familiar with each other's winning characters, and carry on childlike romance into maturer sentiment. She spoke, though briefly, of her visit to Darrell, and its ill success—of the few letters that had passed since then between herself and Lionel, in which it was settled that he should seek no parting interview with Sophy. He had declared to Sophy no formal suit—they had exchanged no lovers' vows. It would be, therefore, but a dishonorable cruelty to her to say, "I come to tell you that I love you, and that we must part forever." And how avow the reason—that reason that would humble her to the dust? Lionel was forbidden to wed with one whom Jasper Losely called daughter, and whom the guardian she so venerated believed to be his grandchild. All of comfort that Lady Montfort could suggest was, that Sophy was so young that she would conquer what might be but a girl's romantic sentiment—or, if a more serious attachment, one that no troth had cemented—for a person she might not see again for years; Lionel was negotiating exchange into a regiment on active service. "Meanwhile," said Lady Montfort, "I shall never wed again. I shall make it known that I look on your Sophy as the child of my adoption. If I do not live to save sufficient for her out of an income that is more than thrice what I require, I have instructed my lawyers to insure my life for her provision; it will be ample. Many a wooer, captivating as Lionel, and free from the scruples that fetter his choice, will be proud to kneel at the feet of one so lovely. This rank of mine, which has never yet bestowed on me a joy, now becomes of value, since it will give dignity to—to Matilda's child, and—and to—"

Lady Montfort sobbed.

Waife listened respectfully, and for the time was comforted. Certainly, in his own heart he was glad that Lionel Haughton was permanently separated from Sophy. There was scarcely a man on earth, of fair station and repute, to whom he would have surrendered Sophy with so keen a pang as to Charles Haughton's son.

The poor young lovers! all the stars seemed against them! Was it not enough that Guy Darrell should be so obdurate? must the mild William Losely be also a malefic in their horoscope?

But when, that same evening, the old man more observantly than ever watched his grandchild, his comfort vanished—misgivings came over him—he felt assured that the fatal shaft had been broken in the wound, and that the heart was bleeding inly.

True; not without prophetic insight had Arabella Crane said to the pining, but resolute, quiet child, behind the scenes of Mr. Rugge's show, "How much you will love one day!" All that night Waife lay awake, pondering—revolving—exhausting that wondrous fertility of re-

source which teemed in his inventive brain. In vain!

And now—(the day after this conversation with Lady Montfort, whose illness grieves, but does not surprise him)—now, as he sits and thinks, and gazes abstractedly into that far, pale, winter sky—now, the old man is still scheming how to reconcile a human loving heart to the eternal loss of that affection which has so many perishable counterfeits, but which, when true in all its elements — complete in all its varied wealth of feeling—is never to be forgotten, and never to be replaced.

CHAPTER II.

An offering to the Manes.

THREE sides of Waife's cottage were within Lady Montfort's grounds; the fourth side, with its more public entrance, bordered the lane. Now, as he thus sate, he was startled by a low timid ring at the door which opened on the lane. Who could it be?—not Jasper! He began to tremble. The ring was repeated. One woman-servant composed all his establishment. He heard her opening the door—heard a low voice; it seemed a soft, fresh young voice. His room-door opened, and the woman, who, of course, knew the visitor by sight and name, having often remarked him on the grounds with Lady Montfort and Sophy, said, in a cheerful tone, as if bringing good news, "Mr. Lionel Haughton."

Scarcely was the door closed—scarcely the young man in the room, before, with all his delightful, passionate frankness, Lionel had clasped Waife's reluctant hand in both his own, and, with tears in his eyes, and choking in his voice, was pouring forth sentences so loosely knit together, that they seemed almost incoherent;—now a burst of congratulation—now a falter of condolence—now words that seemed to supplicate as for pardon to an offense of his own—rapid transitions from enthusiasm to pity—from joy to grief—variable, with the stormy April of a young, fresh, hearty nature.

Taken so wholly by surprise, Waife, in vain attempting to appear cold and distant, and only very vaguely comprehending what the unwelcome visitor so confusedly expressed, at last found voice to interrupt the jet and gush of Lionel's impetuous emotions, and said as dryly as he could, "I am really at a loss to conceive the cause of what appears to be meant as congratulations to me and reproaches to yourself, Mr.—Mr. Haught—"; his lips could not complete the distasteful name.

"My name shocks you—no wonder," said Lionel, deeply mortified, and bowing down his head as he gently dropped the old man's hand. "Reproaches to myself!—Ah, Sir, I am here as Charles Haughton's son!"

"What!" exclaimed Waife, "you know? How could you know that Charles Haughton—"

LIONEL (interrupting). "I know! His own lips confessed his shame to have so injured you."

WAIFE. "Confessed to whom?"

LIONEL. "To Alban Morley. Believe me, my father's remorse was bitter; it dies not in his grave, it lives in me. I have so longed to meet with William Losely."

Waife seated himself in silence, shading his face with one hand, while with the other he made a slight gesture, as if to discourage or rebuke farther allusion to ancient wrong. Lionel, in quick accents, but more connected meaning, went on—

"I have just come from Mr. Darrell, where I and Colonel Morley (here Lionel's countenance was darkly troubled) have been staying some days. Two days ago I received this letter from George Morley, forwarded to me from London. It says—let me read it—'You will rejoice to learn that our dear Waife'—pardon that name."

"I have no other—go on."

"Is once more with his grandchild." (Here Lionel sighed heavily—sigh like Sophy's.) "You will rejoice yet more to learn that it has pleased Heaven to allow me and another witness, who, some years ago, had been misled into condemning Waife, to be enabled to bear incontrovertible testimony to the complete innocence of my beloved friend; nay, more—I say to you most solemnly, that in all which appeared to attest guilt there has been a virtue, which, if known to Mr. Darrell, would make him bow in reverence to that old man. Tell Mr. Darrell so from me; and add, that in saying it, I expressed my conviction of his own admiring sympathy for all that is noble and heroic."

"Too much—this is too, too much," stammered out Waife, restlessly turning away; "but—but, you are folding up the letter. That is all?—he does not say more?—he does not mention any one else?—eh—eh?"

"No, Sir; that is all."

"Thank Heaven! He is an honorable man! Yet he has said more than he ought — much more than he can prove, or than I—" He broke off, and abruptly asked, "How did Mr. Darrell take these assertions? With an incredulous laugh—eh?—'Why, the old rogue had pleaded guilty!'"

"Sir, Alban Morley was there to speak of the William Losely whom he had known; to explain, from facts which he had collected at the time, of what nature was the evidence *not* brought forward. The motive that induced you to plead guilty I had long guessed; it flashed in an instant on Guy Darrell; it was not mere guess with him! You ask me what he said? This: 'Grand nature! George is right, and I do bow my head in reverence!'"

"He said *that?*—Guy Darrell? On your honor, he said that?"

"Can you doubt it? Is he not a gentleman?"

Waife was fairly overcome.

"But, Sir," resumed Lionel, "I must not conceal from you, that, though George's letter and Alban Morley's communications sufficed to satisfy Darrell, without farther question, your old friend was naturally anxious to learn a more full account, in the hope of legally substantiating your innocence. He therefore dispatched by the telegraph a request to his nephew to come at once to Fawley. George arrived there yesterday. Do not blame him, Sir, that we share his secret."

"You do? Good Heavens! And that lawyer will be barbarous enough too; but no—he has an interest in not accusing of midnight robbery his daughter's husband; Jasper's secret is safe with him. And Colonel Morley — surely

his cruel nephew will not suffer him to make me—me, with one foot in the grave—a witness against my Lizzy's son!"

"Colonel Morley, at Darrell's suggestion, came with me to London; and if he does not accompany me to you, it is because he is even now busied in finding out your son, not to undo, but to complete, the purpose of your self-sacrifice. 'All other considerations,' said Guy Darrell, 'must be merged in this one thought—that such a father shall not have been in vain a martyr.' Colonel Morley is empowered to treat with your son on any terms; but on this condition, that the rest of his life shall inflict no farther pain, no farther fear on you. This is the sole use to which, without your consent, we have presumed to put the secret we have learned. Do you pardon George now?"

Waife's lips murmured inaudibly, but his face grew very bright; and as it was raised upward, Lionel's ear caught the whisper of a name—it was not Jasper, it was "Lizzy."

"Ah! why," said Lionel, sadly, and after a short pause, "why was I not permitted to be the one to attest your innocence — to clear your name? I, who owed to you so vast an hereditary debt! And now — dear, dear Mr. Losely—"

"Hush! Waife!—call me Waife still!—and always."

"Willingly! It is the name by which I have accustomed myself to love you. Now, listen to me. I am dishonored until at least the mere pecuniary debt, due to you from my father, is paid. Hist! hist!—Alban Morley says so—Darrell says so. Darrell says 'he can not own me as kinsman till that debt is canceled.' Darrell lends me the means to do it; he would share his kinsman's ignominy if he did not. Before I could venture even to come hither, the sum due to you from my father was repaid. I hastened to town yesterday evening—saw Mr. Darrell's lawyer. I have taken a great liberty —I have invested this sum already in the purchase of an annuity for you. Mr. Darrell's lawyer had a client who was in immediate want of the sum due to you; and, not wishing permanently to burden his estate by mortgage, would give a larger interest by way of annuity than the public offices would; excellent landed security. The lawyer said it would be a pity to let the opportunity slip, so I ventured to act for you. It was all settled this morning. The particulars are on this paper, which I will leave with you. Of course the sum due to you is not exactly the same as that which my father borrowed before I was born. There is the interest—compound interest; nothing more. I don't understand such matters; Darrell's lawyer made the calculation—it must be right."

Waife had taken the paper, glanced at its contents, dropped it in confusion, amaze. Those hundreds lent swelled into all those thousands returned! And all methodically computed—tersely—arithmetically—down to fractions. So that every farthing seemed, and indeed was, his lawful due. And that sum invested in an annuity of £500 a year!—income which, to poor Gentleman Waife, seemed a prince's revenue!

"It is quite a business-like computation, I tell you, Sir; all done by a lawyer. It is indeed," cried Lionel, dismayed at Waife's look and gesture. "Compound interest *will* run up to what seems a large amount at first; every child knows that. You can't deny Cocker and calculating tables, and that sort of thing. William Losely, you can not leave an eternal load of disgrace on the head of Charles Haughton's son."

"Poor Charlie Haughton," murmured Waife. "And I was feeling bitter against his memory —bitter against his son. How Heaven loves to teach us the injustice that dwells in anger! But —but—this can not be. I thank Mr. Darrell humbly—I can not take his money."

"It is not his money—it is mine; he only advances it to me. It costs him really nothing, for he deducts the £500 a year from the allowance he makes me. And I don't want such an absurd allowance as I had before going out of the Guards into the line—I mean to be a soldier in good earnest. Too much pocket-money spoils a soldier — only gets one into scrapes. Alban Morley says the same. Darrell, too, says 'Right, no gold could buy a luxury like the payment of a father's debt!' You can not grudge me that luxury—you dare not!—why? because you are an honest man."

"Softly, softly, softly," said Waife. "Let me look at you. Don't talk of money now—don't let us think of money! What a look of your father! 'Tis he, 'tis he, whom I see before me! Charlie's sweet bright playful eyes—that might have turned aside from the path of duty — a sheriff's officer! Ah! and Charlie's happy laugh, too, at the slightest joke! But *this* is not Charlie's—it is all your own (touching, with gentle finger, Lionel's broad truthful brow). Poor Charlie, he *was* grieved—you are right—I remember."

"Sir," said Lionel, who was now on one knee by Waife's chair—"Sir, I have never yet asked man for his blessing — not even Guy Darrell. Will you put your hand on my head; and oh! that in the mystic world beyond us, some angel may tell Charles Haughton that William Losely has blessed his son!"

Solemnly, but with profound humility—one hand on the Bible beside him, one on the young soldier's bended head—William Losely blessed Charles Haughton's son—and, having done so, involuntarily his arms opened, and blessing was followed by embrace.

CHAPTER III.

Nothing so obstinate as a young man's hope; nothing so eloquent as a lover's tongue.

Hitherto there had been no reference to Sophy. Not Sophy's lover, but Charles Haughton's son had knelt to Waife and received the old man's blessing. But Waife could not be long forgetful of his darling—nor his anxiety on her account. The expression in his varying face changed suddenly. Not half an hour before, Lionel Haughton was the last man in the world to whom willingly he would have consigned his grandchild. Now, of all men in the world Lionel Haughton would have been his choice. He sighed heavily; he comprehended, by his own changed feelings, how tender and profound an affection Lionel Haughton might inspire in a heart so fresh as Sophy's, and so tenacious of the impressions it received. But they were sep-

arated forever; she ought not even again to see him. Uneasily Waife glanced toward the open window—rose involuntarily, closed it, and drew down the blind.

"You must go now, young gentleman," said he, almost churlishly.

The quick lover's sense in Lionel divined why the blind was drawn, and the dismissal so abruptly given.

"Give me your address," said Waife; "I will write about—that paper. Don't now stay longer—pray—pray."

"Do not fear, Sir. I am not lingering here with the wish to see—*her!*"

Waife looked down.

"Before I asked the servant to announce me, I took the precaution to learn that you were alone. But a few words more—hear them patiently. Have you any proof that could satisfy Mr. Darrell's reason that your Sophy is his daughter's child?"

"I have Jasper's assurance that she is; and the copy of the nurse's attestation to the same effect. They satisfied me. I would not have asked Mr. Darrell to be as easily contented; I could but have asked him to inquire, and satisfy himself. But he would not even hear me."

"He will hear you now, and with respect."

"He will!" cried Waife, joyously. "And if he should inquire, and if Sophy should prove to be, as I have ever believed, his daughter's child, would he not own, and receive, and cherish her?"

"Alas! Sir, do not let me pain you; but that is not my hope. If, indeed, it should prove that your son deceived you—that Sophy is no way related to him—if she should be the child of peasants, but of honest peasants—why, Sir, *that* is my hope, my last hope—for then I would kneel once more at your feet, and implore your permission to win her affection and ask her hand."

"What! Mr. Darrell would consent to your union with the child of peasants, and not with his own grandchild?"

"Sir, Sir, you rack me to the heart; but if you knew all, you would not wonder to hear me say, 'I dare not ask Mr. Darrell to bless my union with the daughter of Jasper Losely.'"

Waife suppressed a groan, and began to pace the room with disordered steps.

"But," resumed Lionel, "go to Fawley yourself. Seek Darrell; compare the reasons for your belief with his for rejecting it. At this moment his pride is more subdued than I have ever known it. He will go calmly into the investigation of facts; the truth will become clear. Sir—dear, dear Sir—I am not without a hope."

"A hope that the child I have so cherished should be nothing in the world to me!"

"Nothing to you! Is memory such a shadow?—is affection such a weathercock? Has the love between you and Sophy been only the instinct of kindred blood? Has it not been hallowed by all that makes Age and Childhood so pure a blessing to each other, rooted in trials borne together? Were you not the first who taught her, in wanderings, in privations, to see a Mother in Nature, and pray to a Father which is in Heaven? Would all this be blotted out of your souls if she were not the child of that son whom it chills you to remember? Sir, if there be no tie to replace the mere bond of kindred, why have you taken such vigilant pains to separate a child from him whom you believe to be her father?"

Waife stood motionless and voiceless. This passionate appeal struck him forcibly.

"And, Sir," added Lionel, in a lower, sadder tone—"can I ask you, whose later life has been one sublime self-sacrifice, whether you would rather that you might call Sophy grandchild, and know her wretched, than know her but as the infant angel whom Heaven sent to your side when bereaved and desolate, and know also that she was happy? Oh, William Losely, pray with me that Sophy may not be your grandchild. Her home will not be less your home—her attachment will not less replace to you your lost son—and on your knee her children may learn to lisp the same prayers that you taught to her. Go to Darrell—go—go! and take me with you!"

"I will—I will!" exclaimed Waife; and snatching at his hat and staff—"Come—come! But Sophy should not learn that you have been here—that I have gone away with you; it might set her thinking, dreaming, hoping—all to end in greater sorrow." He bustled out of the room to caution the old woman, and to write a few hasty lines to Sophy herself—assuring her, on his most solemn honor, that he was not now flying from her to resume his vagrant life—that, without fail, please Heaven, he would return that night or the next day.

In a few minutes he reopened the room door, beckoning silently to Lionel, and then stole into the quiet lane with quick steps.

CHAPTER IV.

Guy Darrell's views in the invitation to Waife.

Lionel had but inadequately represented, for he could but imperfectly comprehend, the profound impression made upon Guy Darrell by George Morley's disclosures. Himself so capable of self-sacrifice, Darrell was the man above all others to regard with an admiring reverence, which partook of awe, a self-immolation that seemed almost above humanity—to him who set so lofty an estimate on good name and fair repute. He had not only willingly permitted, but even urged Lionel to repair to Waife, and persuade the old man to come to Fawley. With Waife he was prepared to enter into the full discussion of Sophy's alleged parentage. But apart even from considerations that touched a cause of perplexity which disquieted himself, Darrell was eager to see and to show homage to the sufferer, in whom he recognized a hero's dignity. And if he had sent by Lionel no letter from himself to Waife, it was only because, in the exquisite delicacy of feeling that belonged to him when his best emotions were aroused, he felt it just that the whole merit, and the whole delight of reparation to the wrongs of William Losely, should, without direct interposition of his own, be left exclusively to Charles Haughton's son. Thus far it will be acknowledged that Guy Darrell was not one of those men who, once warmed to magnanimous impulse, are cooled by a thrifty prudence when action grows out of the impulse. Guy Darrell could not be generous by drachm and scruple. Not apt to

say, "I apologize"—slow to say, "I repent;" very—very—very slow indeed to say, "I forgive;" yet let him once say, "I repent," "I apologize," or "I forgive," and it was said with his whole heart and soul.

But it must not be supposed that, in authorizing Lionel to undertake the embassy to Waife, or in the anticipation of what might pass between Waife and himself should the former consent to revisit the old house from which he had been so scornfully driven, Darrell had altered, or dreamed of altering, one iota of his resolves against a union between Lionel and Sophy. True, Lionel had induced him to say, "Could it be indisputably proved that no drop of Jasper Losely's blood were in this girl's veins—that she were the lawful child of honest parents, however humble—my right to stand between her and yourself would cease." But a lawyer's experience is less credulous than a lover's hope. And to Darrell's judgment it was wholly improbable that any honest parents, however humble, should have yielded their child to a knave like Jasper, while it was so probable that his own persuasion was well-founded, and that she was Jasper's daughter, though not Matilda's.

The winter-evening had closed. George and Darrell were conversing in the library; the theme, of course, was Waife; and Darrell listened with vivid interest to George's graphic accounts of the old man's gentle, playful humor—with its vague desultory under-currents of poetic fancy or subtle wisdom. But when George turned to speak of Sophy's endearing, lovely nature, and, though cautiously, to intimate an appeal on her behalf to Darrell's sense of duty, or susceptibility to kindly emotions, the proud man's brow became knit, and his stately air evinced displeasure. Fortunately, just at a moment when farther words might have led to a permanent coldness between men so disposed to esteem each other, they heard the sound of wheels on the frosty ground—the shrill bell at the porch-door.

CHAPTER V.

The vagabond received in the Manor House at Fawley.

Very lamely, very feebly, declining Lionel's arm, but leaning heavily on his crutch-stick, Waife crossed the threshold of the Manor House. George sprang forward to welcome him. The old man looked on the preacher's face with a kind of wandering uncertainty in his eye, and George saw that his cheek was very much flushed. He limped on through the hall, still leaning on his staff, George and Lionel at either side. A pace or two, and there stood Darrell! Did he, the host, not spring forward to offer an arm, to extend a hand! No, such greeting in Darrell would have been but vulgar courtesy. As the old man's eye rested on him, the superb gentleman bowed low—bowed as we bow to kings!

They entered the library. Darrell made a sign to George and Lionel. They understood the sign, and left visitor and host alone.

Lionel drew George into the quaint old dining-hall. "I am very uneasy about our dear friend," he said, in agitated accents. "I fear that I have had too little consideration for his years and his sensitive nature, and that, what with the excitement of the conversation that passed between us, and the fatigue of the journey, his nerves have broken down. We were not half-way on the road, and as we had the railway carriage to ourselves, I was talking to him with imprudent earnestness, when he began to tremble all over, and went into a hysterical paroxysm of mingled tears and laughter. I wished to stop at the next station, but he was not long recovering, and insisted on coming on. Still, as we approached Fawley, after muttering to himself, as far as I could catch his words, incoherently, he sank into a heavy state of lethargy or stupor, resting his head on my shoulder. It was with difficulty I roused him when he entered the park."

"Poor old man," said George, feelingly; "no doubt the quick succession of emotions through which he has lately passed has overcome him for the time. But the worst is now past. His interview with Darrell must cheer his heart and soothe his spirits; and that interview over, we must give him all repose and nursing. But tell me what passed between you—if he was very indignant that I could not suffer men like you and my uncle Alban, and Guy Darrell, to believe him a pick-lock and a thief?"

Lionel began his narrative, but had not proceeded far in it before Darrell's voice was heard shouting loud and the library bell rang violently.

They hurried into the library, and Lionel's fears were verified. Waife was in strong convulsions; and as these gradually ceased, and he rested without struggle, half on the floor, half in Darrell's arms, he was evidently unconscious of all around him. His eye was open, but fixed in a glassy stare. The servants thronged into the room; one was dispatched instantly to summon the nearest medical practitioner. "Help me—George—Lionel," said Darrell, "to bear him up stairs. Mills, light us." When they reached the landing-place, Mills asked, "Which room, Sir?"

Darrell hesitated an instant, then his gray eye lit into its dark fire. "My father's room—he shall rest on my father's bed."

When the surgeon arrived, he declared Waife to be in imminent danger—pressure on the brain. He prescribed prompt and vigorous remedies, which had indeed before the surgeon's arrival suggested themselves to, and been partly commenced by, Darrell, who had gone through too many varieties of experience to be unversed in the rudiments of leechcraft. "If I were in my guest's state," asked Darrell of the practitioner, "what would you do?"

"Telegraph instantly for Dr. F——."

"Lionel—you hear? Take my own horse—he will carry you like the wind. Off to * * * *; it is the nearest telegraph station."

Darrell did not stir from Waife's bedside all that anxious night. Dr. F—— did not arrive till morning. He approved of all that had been done, but nevertheless altered the treatment; and after staying some hours, said to Darrell, "I am compelled to leave you for the present; nor could I be of use in staying. I have given all the aid in my power to Nature—we must leave the rest to Nature herself. That fever—those fierce throes and spasms—are but Na-

ture's efforts to cast off the grasp of the enemy we do not see. It now depends on what degree of rallying power be left to the patient. Fortunately, his frame is robust, yet not plethoric. Do you know his habits?"

"I know," answered George; "most temperate, most innocent."

"Then, with constant care, minute attention to my directions, he may recover."

"If care and attention can save my guest's life he shall not die," said Darrell.

The physician looked at the speaker's pale face and compressed lips. "But, Mr. Darrell, I must not have you on my hands too. You must not be out of your bed again to-night."

"Certainly not," said George. "I shall watch alone."

"No," cried Lionel, "that is my post, too."

"Pooh!" said Darrell; "young men so far from Death are not such watchful sentinels against his stroke as men of my years, who have seen him in all aspects; and, moreover, base indeed is the host who deserts his own guest's sick-chamber. Fear not for me, doctor; no man needs sleep less than I do."

Dr. F—— slid his hand on Darrell's pulse. "Irregular — quick; but what vitality! what power!—a young man's pulse! Mr. Darrell, many years for your country's service are yet in these lusty beats."

Darrell breathed his chronic sigh, and, turning back to Waife's bedside, said, "When will you come again?"

"The day after to-morrow."

When the doctor returned Waife was out of immediate danger. Nature, fortified by the "temperate, innocent habits" which husband up her powers, had dislodged, at least for a time, her enemy; but the attack was followed by extreme debility. It was clear that for days, perhaps even weeks to come, the vagrant must remain a prisoner under Darrell's roof-tree.

Lionel had been too mindful of Sophy's anxiety to neglect writing to Lady Montfort the day after Waife's seizure. But he could not find the heart to state the old man's danger; and with the sanguine tendencies of his young nature, even when at the worst, he clung to belief in the best. He refrained from any separate and private communication of Waife's state to Lady Montfort, lest the sadness it would not fail to occasion her should be perceptible to Sophy, and lead her to divine the cause. So he contented himself with saying that Waife had accompanied him to Mr. Darrell's, and would be detained there, treated with all kindness and honor, for some days.

Sophy's mind was relieved by this intelligence, but it filled her with wonder and conjecture. That Waife, who had so pertinaciously refused to break bread as a guest under any man's roof-tree, should be for days receiving the hospitality of Lionel Haughton's wealthy and powerful kinsman, was indeed mysterious. But whatever brought Waife and Lionel thus in confidential intercourse could not but renew yet more vividly the hopes she had been endeavoring of late to stifle. And combining together many desultory remembrances of words escaped unawares from Lionel, from Lady Montfort, from Waife himself, the truth (of which her native acuteness had before admitted glimpses) grew almost clear to her. Was not Mr. Darrell that relation to her lost mother upon whom she had claims not hitherto conceded? Lionel and Waife both with that relation now! Surely the clouds that had rested on her future were admitting the sun through their opening rents—and she blushed as she caught its ray.

CHAPTER VI.

Individual concessions are like political; when you once begin, there is no saying where you will stop.

Waife's first words on recovering consciousness were given to thoughts of Sophy. He had promised her to return, at farthest, the next day; she would be so uneasy—he must get up—he must go at once. When he found his strength would not suffer him to rise, he shed tears. It was only very gradually, and at intervals, that he became acquainted with the length and severity of his attack, or fully sensible that he was in Darrell's house; that that form, of which he had retained vague, dreamy reminiscences, hanging over his pillow, wiping his brow, and soothing him with the sweetest tones of the sweet human voice—that that form, so genial, so brotherlike, was the man who had once commanded him not to sully with his presence a stainless home.

All that had passed within the last few days was finally made clear to him in a short, unwitnessed, touching conversation with his host; after which, however, he became gradually worse; his mind remaining clear, but extremely dejected; his bodily strength evidently sinking. Dr. F—— was again summoned in haste. That great physician was, as every great physician should be, a profound philosopher, though with a familiar ease of manner, and a light, off-hand vein of talk, which made the philosophy less sensible to the taste than any other ingredient in his pharmacopœia. Turning every body else out of the room, he examined his patient alone—sounded the old man's vital organs, with ear and with stethoscope—talked to him now on his feelings, now on the news of the day, and then stepped out to Darrell.

"Something on the heart, my dear Sir; I can't get at it; perhaps you can. Take off that something, and the springs will react, and my patient will soon recover. All about him sound as a rock—but the heart; that has been horribly worried; something worries it now. His heart may be seen in his eye. Watch his eye; it is missing some face it is accustomed to see."

Darrell changed color. He stole back into Waife's room, and took the old man's hand. Waife returned the pressure, and said, "I was just praying for you—and—and—I am sinking fast. Do not let me die, Sir, without wishing poor Sophy a last good-by!"

Darrell passed back to the landing-place, where George and Lionel were standing, while Dr. F—— was snatching a hasty refreshment in the library before his return to town. Darrell laid his hand on Lionel's shoulder. "Lionel, you must go back to London with Dr. F——. I can not keep you here longer. I want your room."

"Sir," said Lionel, aghast, "while Waife is still so ill! You can not be thus unkind."

"Inconsiderate egotist! would you deprive the old man of a presence dearer to him than yours? George, you will go too; but *you* will return. You told me yesterday that your wife was in London for a few days; entreat her to accompany you hither; entreat her to bring with her the poor young lady whom my guest pines to see at his bedside—*the face that his eye misses.*"

CHAPTER VII.

Sophy, Darrell, and the Flute-player. Darrell prepares a surprise for Waife.

Sophy is come. She has crossed that inexorable threshold. She is a guest in the house which rejects her as a daughter. She has been there some days. Waife revived at the first sight of her tender face. He has left his bed; can move for some hours a day into an adjoining chamber, which has been hastily arranged for his private sitting-room; and can walk its floors with a step that grows daily firmer in the delight of leaning on Sophy's arm.

Since the girl's arrival, Darrell has relaxed his watch over the patient. He never now enters his guest's apartment without previous notice; and, by that incommunicable instinct which passes in households between one silent breast and another, as by a law equally strong to attract or repel—here drawing together, there keeping apart—though no rule in either case has been laid down—by virtue, I say, of that strange intelligence, Sophy is not in the old man's room when Darrell enters. Rarely in the twenty-four hours do the host and the fair young guest encounter. But Darrell is a quick and keen observer. He has seen enough of Sophy to be sensible of her charm — to penetrate into her simple, natural loveliness of character—to feel a deep interest in her, and a still deeper pity for Lionel. Secluding himself as much as possible in his private room, or in his leafless woods, his reveries increase in gloom. Nothing unbends his moody brow like Fairthorn's flute or Fairthorn's familiar converse.

It has been said before that Fairthorn knew his secrets. Fairthorn had idolized Caroline Lyndsay. Fairthorn was the only being in the world to whom Guy Darrell could speak of Caroline Lyndsay—to whom he could own the unconquerable but unforgiving love which had twice driven him from the social world. Even to Fairthorn, of course, all could not be told. Darrell could not speak of the letter he had received at Malta, nor of Caroline's visit to him at Fawley; for to do so, even to Fairthorn, was like a treason to the *dignity* of the Beloved. And Guy Darrell might rail at her inconstancy—her heartlessness; but to boast that she had lowered herself by the proffers that were dictated by repentance, Guy Darrell could not do *that*;—he was a gentleman. Still there was much left to say. He could own that he thought she would now accept his hand; and when Fairthorn looked happy at that thought, and hinted at excuses for her former fickleness, it was a great relief to Darrell to fly into a rage; but if the flute-player meanly turned round and became himself Caroline's accuser, then poor Fairthorn was indeed frightened, for Darrell's trembling lip or melancholy manner overwhelmed the assailant with self-reproach, and sent him sidelong into one of his hidden coverts.

But at this moment Fairthorn was a support to him under other trials—Fairthorn, who respects as he does, as no one else ever can, the sanctity of the Darrell line—who would shrink like himself from the thought that the daughter of Jasper Losely, and in all probability not a daughter of Matilda Darrell, should ever be mistress of that ancestral hall, lowly and obscure and mouldering though it be—and that the child of a sharper, a thief, a midnight assassin, should carry on the lineage of knights and warriors in whose stainless scutcheons, on many a Gothic tomb or over the portals of ruined castles, was impaled the heraldry of Brides sprung from the loins of Lion Kings! Darrell, then, doing full justice to all Sophy's beauty and grace, purity and goodness, was more and more tortured by the conviction that she could never be wife to the man on whom, for want of all nearer kindred, would devolve the heritage of the Darrell name.

On the other hand, Sophy's feelings toward her host were almost equally painful and imbittered. The tenderness and reverence that he had showed to her beloved grandfather, the affecting gratitude with which Waife spoke of him, necessarily deepened her prepossessions in his favor as Lionel's kinsman; and though she saw him so sparingly, still, when they did meet, she had no right to complain of his manner. It might be distant, taciturn; but it was gentle, courteous—the manner which might be expected, in a host of secluded habits, to a young guest from whose sympathies he was removed by years, but to whose comforts he was unobtrusively considerate — whose wishes were delicately forestalled. Yet was this all that her imagination had dared to picture on entering those gray walls? Where was the evidence of the relationship of which she had dreamed?—where a single sign that she was more in that house than a mere guest?—where, alas! a token that even Lionel had named her to his kinsman, and that for Lionel's sake that kinsman bade her welcome? And Lionel too—gone the very day before she arrived! *That* she learned incidentally from the servant who showed her into her room. Gone, and not addressed a line to herself, though but to condole with her on her grandfather's illness, or congratulate her that the illness had spared the life! She felt wounded to the very core. As Waife's progressive restoration allowed her thoughts more to revert to so many causes for pain and perplexity, the mystery of all connected with her own and Waife's sojourn under that roof baffled her attempts at conjecture. The old man did not volunteer explanations. Timidly she questioned him; but his nerves yet were so unstrung, and her questions so evidently harassed him, that she only once made that attempt to satisfy her own bewilderment, and smiled as if contented when he said, after a long pause, "Patience yet, my child; let me get a little stronger. You see Mr. Darrell will not suffer me to talk with him on matters that must be discussed with him before I go; and then—and then—Patience till then, Sophy."

Neither George nor his wife gave her any clew to the inquiries that preyed upon her mind. The

latter, a kind, excellent woman, meekly devoted to her husband, either was, or affected to be, in ignorance of the causes that had led Waife to Fawley, save very generally that Darrell had once wronged him by an erring judgment, and had hastened to efface that wrong. And then she kissed Sophy fondly, and told her that brighter days were in store for the old man and herself. George said, with more authority—the authority of the priest—"Ask no questions. Time, that solves all riddles, is hurrying on, and Heaven directs its movements."

Her very heart was shut up, except where it could gush forth—nor even then with full tide—in letters to Lady Montfort. Caroline had heard from George's wife, with intense emotion, that Sophy was summoned to Darrell's house, the gravity of Waife's illness being considerately suppressed. Lady Montfort could but suppose that Darrell's convictions had been shaken—his resolutions softened; that he sought an excuse to see Sophy, and judge of her himself. Under this impression, in parting with her young charge, Caroline besought Sophy to write to her constantly, and frankly. Sophy felt an inexpressible relief in this correspondence. But Lady Montfort in her replies was not more communicative than Waife or the Morleys, only she seemed more thoughtfully anxious that Sophy should devote herself to the task of propitiating her host's affections. She urged her to try and break through his reserve—see more of him; as if that were possible! And her letters were more filled with questions about Darrell than even with admonitions and soothings to Sophy. The letters that arrived at Fawley were brought in a bag, which Darrell opened; but Sophy noticed that it was with a peculiar compression of lip, and a marked change of color, that he had noticed the handwriting on Lady Montfort's first letter to her, and that after that first time her letters were not inclosed in the bag, but came apart, and were never again given to her by her host.

Thus passed days in which Sophy's time was spent chiefly in Waife's sick-room. But now he is regaining strength hourly. To his sitting-room comes George frequently to relieve Sophy's watch. There, once a day, comes Guy Darrell, and what then passed between the two men none witnessed. In these hours Waife insisted upon Sophy's going forth for air and exercise. She is glad to steal out alone—steal down by the banks of the calm lake, or into the gloom of the mournful woods. Here she not unfrequently encounters Fairthorn, who, having taken more than ever to the flute, is driven more than ever to outdoor rambles; for he has been cautioned not to indulge in his melodious resource within doors lest he disturb the patient.

Fairthorn and Sophy thus made acquaintance, distant and shy at first on both sides; but it gradually became more frank and cordial. Fairthorn had an object not altogether friendly in encouraging this intimacy. He thought, poor man, that he should be enabled to extract from Sophy some revelations of her early life, which would elucidate, not in favor of her asserted claims, the mystery that hung upon her parentage. But had Dick Fairthorn been the astutest of diplomatists, in this hope he would have been equally disappointed. Sophy had nothing to communicate. Her ingenuousness utterly baffled the poor flute-player. Out of an innocent, unconscious kind of spite, on ceasing to pry into Sophy's descent, he began to enlarge upon the dignity of Darrell's. He inflicted on her the long-winded genealogical memoir, the recital of which had, on a previous occasion, so nearly driven Lionel Haughton from Fawley. He took her to see the antiquary's grave; he spoke to her, as they stood there, of Darrell's ambitious boyhood—his arid, laborious manhood—his determination to restore the fallen line—the very vow he had made to the father he had so pityingly revered. He sought to impress on her the consciousness that she was the guest of one who belonged to a race with whom spotless honor was the all in all; and who had gone through life with bitter sorrows, but reverencing that race, and vindicating that honor: Fairthorn's eye would tremble—his eyes flash on her while he talked. She, poor child, could not divine why; but she felt that he was angry with her—*speaking at her*. In fact, Fairthorn's prickly tongue was on the barbed point of exclaiming, "And how dare you foist yourself into this unsullied lineage!—how dare you think that the dead would not turn in their graves ere they would make room in the vault of the Darrells for the daughter of a Jasper Losely!" But though she could not conceive the musician's covert meaning in these heraldic discourses, Sophy, with a justness of discrimination that must have been intuitive, separated from the more fantastic declamations of the grotesque genealogist that which was genuine and pathetic in the single image of the last descendant in a long and gradually-falling race, lifting it up once more into power and note on toiling shoulders, and standing on the verge of age, with the melancholy consciousness that the effort was successful only for his fleeting life; that, with all his gold, with all his fame, the hope which had achieved alike the gold and the fame was a lying mockery, and that name and race would perish with himself, when the earth yawned for him beside the antiquary's grave. And these recitals made her conceive a more soft and tender interest in Guy Darrell than she had before admitted; they accounted for the mournfulness on his brow; they lessened her involuntary awe of that stateliness of bearing, which before had only chilled her as the evidence of pride.

While Fairthorn and Sophy thus matured acquaintance, Darrell and Waife were drawing closer and closer to each other. Certainly no one would be predisposed to suspect any congeniality of taste, intellect, experience, or emotion, between two men whose lives had been so widely different—in whose faults or merits the ordinary observer would have seen nothing but antagonism and contrast. Unquestionably their characters were strikingly dissimilar, yet there was that in each which the other recognized as familiar to his own nature. Each had been the victim of his heart; each had passed over the plowshare of self-sacrifice. Darrell had offered up his youth—Waife his age;—Darrell to a Father and the unrequiting Dead—Waife to a Son whose life had become his terror. To one man, NAME had been an idol; to the other, NAME had been a weed cast away into the mire. To the

one man, unjoyous, evanescent glory—to the other, a shame that had been borne with a sportive cheerfulness, dashed into sorrow only when the world's contumely threatened to despoil Affection of its food. But there was something akin in their joint experience of earthly vanities;—so little solace in worldly honors to the triumphant Orator—so little of misery to the vagrant Mime while his conscience mutely appealed to Heaven from the verdict of his kind. And as beneath all the levity and whim of the man reared and nurtured, and fitted by his characteristic tendencies, to view life through its humors, not through its passions, there still ran a deep under-current of grave and earnest intellect and feeling—so too, amidst the severer and statelier texture of the once ambitious, laborious mind, which had conducted Darrell to renown—amidst all that gathered-up intensity of passion, which admitted no comedy into Sorrow, and saw in Love but the aspect of Fate—amidst all this lofty seriousness of soul, there was yet a vivid capacity of enjoyment—those fine sensibilities to the pleasurable sun-rays of life, which are constitutional to all GENIUS, no matter how grave its vocations. True, affliction at last may dull them, as it dulls all else that we took from Nature when she equipped us for life. Yet, in the mind of Darrell, affliction had shattered the things most gravely coveted, even more than it had marred its perceptive acknowledgment of the sympathies between fancies that move to smiles, and thoughts that bequeath solemn lessons, or melt to no idle tears. Had Darrell been placed amidst the circumstances that make happy the homes of earnest men, Darrell would have been mirthful; had Waife been placed among the circumstances that concentrate talent, and hedge round life with trained thicksets and belting laurels, Waife would have been grave.

It was not in the earlier conferences that took place in Waife's apartment that the subject which had led the old man to Fawley was brought into discussion. When Waife had sought to introduce it—when, after Sophy's arrival, he had looked wistfully into Darrell's face, striving to read there the impression she had created, and, unable to discover, had begun, with tremulous accents, to reopen the cause that weighed on him—Darrell stopped him at once. "Hush—not yet; remember that it was in the very moment you first broached this sorrowful topic, on arriving here, and perceived how different the point of view from which we two must regard it, that your nerves gave way—your illness rushed on you. Wait, not only till you are stronger, but till we know each other better. This subject is one that it becomes us to treat with all the strength of our reason—with all the calm which either can impose upon the feelings that ruffle judgment. At present, talk we of all matters except that, which I promise you shall be fairly discussed at last."

Darrell found, however, that his most effective diversion from the subject connected with Sophy was through another channel in the old man's affections, hopes, and fears. George Morley, in repeating the conversation he had overheard between Waife and Jasper, had naturally, while clearing the father, somewhat softened the bravado and cynicism of the son's language, and more than somewhat brightened the touches of natural feeling by which the bravado and cynicism had been alternated. And Darrell had sufficient magnanimity to conquer the repugnance with which he approached a name associated with so many dark and hateful memories, and, avoiding as much as possible distinct reference to Jasper's past life, to court a consultation on the chances of saving from the worst the life that yet remained. With whom else, indeed, than Jasper's father could Darrell so properly and so unreservedly discuss a matter in which their interest and their fear were in common?—As though he were rendering some compensation to Waife for the disappointment he would experience when Sophy's claims came to be discussed—if he could assist in relieving the old man's mind as to the ultimate fate of the son for whom he had made so grand a sacrifice, Darrell spoke to Waife somewhat in detail of the views with which he had instructed Colonel Morley to find out and to treat with Jasper. He heard from the Colonel almost daily. Alban had not yet discovered Jasper, nor even succeeded in tracing Mrs. Crane! But an account of Jasper's wild farewell visit to that den of thieves, from which he had issued safe and triumphant, had reached the ears of a detective employed by the Colonel, and on tolerably good terms with Cutts; and it was no small comfort to know that Jasper had finally broken with those miscreant comrades, and had never again been seen in their haunts. As Arabella had introduced herself to Alban by her former name, and neither he nor Darrell was acquainted with that she now bore, and as no questions on the subject could be put to Waife during the earlier stages of his illness, so it was several days before the Colonel had succeeded in tracing her out as Mrs. Crane of Podden Place—a discovery effected by a distant relation to whom he had been referred at the famous school of which Arabella had been the pride, and who was no doubt the owner of those sheepskin account-books by which the poor grim woman had once vainly sought to bribe Jasper into honest work. But the house in Podden Place was shut up—not a soul in charge of it. The houses immediately adjoining it were tenantless. The Colonel learned, however, from a female servant in an opposite house, that several days ago she had seen a tall, powerful-looking man enter Mrs. Crane's street-door; that she had not seen him quit it; that some evenings afterward, as this servant was closing up the house in which she served, she had remarked a large private carriage driving away from Mrs. Crane's door; that it was too dark to see who were in the carriage, but she had noticed a woman whom she felt fully sure was Mrs. Crane's servant, Bridgett Greggs, on the box beside the coachman.

Alban had been to the agent employed by Mrs. Crane in the letting of her houses, but had not there gained any information. The Colonel believed that Mrs. Crane had succeeded in removing Jasper from London—had, perhaps, accompanied him abroad. If with her, at all events, for the present, he was safe from the stings of want, and with one who had sworn to save him from his own guilty self. If, however, still in England, Alban had no doubt, sooner or later, to hunt him up.

Upon the whole, this conjectural information, though unsatisfactory, allayed much anxiety. Darrell made the most of it in his representations to Waife. And the old man, as we know, was one not hard to comfort, never quarreling irrevocably with Hope.

And now Waife is rapidly recovering. Darrell, after spending the greater part of several days, intent upon a kind of study from which he had been estranged for many years, takes to frequent absences for the whole day; goes up to London by the earliest train, comes back by the latest. George Morley also goes to London for a few hours. Darrell, on returning, does not allude to the business which took him to the metropolis; neither does George, but the latter seems unusually animated and excited. At length, after one of these excursions, so foreign to his habits, he and George enter together the old man's apartment not long before the early hour at which the convalescent retires to rest. Sophy was seated on the footstool at Waife's knee, reading the Bible to him, his hand resting lightly on her bended head. The sight touched both George and Darrell; but Darrell, of the two, was the more affected. What young, pure voice shall read to *him* the Book of Hope in the evening of lonely age? Sophy started in some confusion, and as, in quitting the room, she passed by Darrell, he took her hand gently, and scanned her features more deliberately, more earnestly than he had ever yet seemed to do; then he sighed, and dropped the hand, murmuring, "Pardon me." Was he seeking to read in that fair face some likeness to the Darrell lineaments? If he had found it, what then? But when Sophy was gone, Darrell came straight to Waife with a cheerful brow—with a kindling eye.

"William Losely," said he.

"Waife, if you please, Sir," interrupted the old man.

"William Losely," repeated Darrell, "justice seeks to repair, so far as, alas! it now can, the wrongs inflicted on the name of William Losely. Your old friend Alban Morley supplying me with the notes he had made in the matter of your trial, I arranged the evidence they furnished. The Secretary for the Home Department is one of my most intimate political friends—a man of humanity—of sense. I placed that evidence before him. I, George, and Mr. Hartopp—saw him after he had perused it—"

"My—son—Lizzy's son!"

"His secret will be kept. The question was not who committed the act for which you suffered, but whether *you* were clearly, incontestably innocent of the act, and, in pleading guilty, did but sublimely bear the penalty of another. There will be no new trial—there are none who would prosecute. I bring back to you the Queen's free pardon under the Great Seal. I should explain to you that this form of the royal grace is so rarely given that it needed all the strength and affecting circumstance of your peculiar case to justify the Home Secretary in listening, not only to the interest I could bring to bear in your favor, but to his own humane inclinations. The pardon under the Great Seal differs from an ordinary pardon. It purges the blood from the taint of felony—it remits all the civil disabilities which the mere expiry of a penal sentence does not remove. In short, as applicable to your case, it becomes virtually a complete and formal attestation of your innocence. Alban Morley will take care to apprise those of your old friends who may yet survive of that revocation of unjust obloquy which this royal deed implies—Alban Morley, who would turn his back on a prince of the blood if but guilty of some jockey trick on the turf! Live henceforth openly, and in broad daylight, if you please; and trust to us three—the Soldier, the Lawyer, the Churchman—to give to this paper that value which your Sovereign's advisers intend it to receive."

"Your hand now, dear old friend!" cried George. "You remember I commanded you once to take mine as man and gentleman; as man and gentleman now honor me with yours."

"Is it possible?" faltered Waife, one hand in George's, the other extended in imploring appeal to Darrell—"is it possible? I vindicated—I cleared—and yet no felon's dock for Jasper!—the son not criminated by the father's acquittal! Tell me that! again—again!"

"It is so, believe me. All that rests is to force on that son, if he have a human heart, the conviction that he will be worse than a parricide if he will not save himself."

"And he will—he shall! Oh that I could but get at him!" exclaimed the preacher.

"And now," said Darrell—"now, George, leave us; for now, upon equal terms, we two fathers can discuss family differences."

CHAPTER VIII.

Sophy's claim examined and canvassed.

"I TAKE this moment," said Darrell, when left alone with Waife—(ah, reader, let *us* keep to that familiar name to the last!)—"I take this moment," said Darrell, "the first moment in which you can feel thoroughly assured that no prejudice against yourself clouds my judgment in reference to her whom you believe to be your grandchild, to commence—and, I trust, to conclude forever—the subject which twice brought you within these walls. On the night of your recent arrival here you gave me this copy of a French woman's declaration, to the effect that two infants had been placed out with her to nurse; that one of them was my poor daughter's infant, who was about to be taken away from her; that the other was confided to her by its parent, a French lady, whom she speaks of as a very liberal and distinguished person, but whose name is not stated in the paper."

WAIFE. "The confession describes that lady as an *artiste*; 'distinguished *artiste*' is the expression—viz., a professional person—a painter—an actress—a singer—or—"

DARRELL (*dryly*). "An opera-dancer! I understand the French word perfectly. And I presume the name is not mentioned in the document from motives of delicacy; the child of a distinguished French *artiste* is not necessarily born in wedlock. But this lady was very grateful to the nurse for the care shown to her infant, who was very sickly; and promised to take the nurse, and the nurse's husband also, into her

service. The nurse states that she herself was very poor; that the lady's offer appeared to her like a permanent provision; that the life of this *artiste's* infant was of the utmost value to her—the life of my poor daughter's child of comparative insignificance. But the infant of the *artiste* died, and the nurse's husband put it into his wife's head to tell your son (then a widower, and who had seen so little of his child as to be easily deceived) that it was his infant who died. The nurse shortly afterward removed to Paris, taking with her to the *artiste's* house the child who in reality was my daughter's."

"It seems very probable, does it not—does it not?" said the ex-comedian, eagerly.

"It seems to me," replied the ex-lawyer, "very probable that a witness entering into court with the confession of one villainous falsehood would have little scruple to tell another. But I proceed. This rich and liberal *artiste* dies; the nurse's conscience then suddenly awakens—she sees Mr. Hammond—she informs him of the fraud she has practiced. A lady of rank, who had known Matilda, and had seen both the infants when both were living under the nurse's charge, and observed them more attentively than your son had done—corroborates the woman's story, stating that the *artiste's* child had dark eyes instead of blue; that the *artiste* herself was never deceived; but, having taken a great fancy to the spurious infant, was willing to receive and cherish it as her own; and that she knows several persons who will depose that they heard the *artiste* say that the child was not her own. On this evidence your son takes to himself this child—and this child is your Sophy—and you wish me to acknowledge her as my daughter's offspring. Do not look me so earnestly in the face, my dear and respected guest! It was when you read in my face what my lips shrunk from uttering that your emotions overcame your strength, and your very mind deserted you. Now, be firmer. Your Sophy has no need of me—she is under your charge, and your name is cleared. She has found a friend—a protectress—in her own sex. Lady Montfort's rank gives to her a position in the world as high as I could offer; and as to mere pecuniary provision for her, make your mind easy—it shall be secured. But bear with me when I add, resolutely and calmly, that this nurse's attestation is to me a grosser and poorer attempt at imposture than I had anticipated; and I am amazed that a man of your abilities should have been contented to accept it."

"Oh, Mr. Darrell, don't say so! It was such a blessing to think, when my son was lost to me, that I might fill up the void in my heart with an innocent, loving child. Don't talk of my abilities. If you, whose abilities none can question—if you had longed and yearned for such a comforter—if you had wished—if you wished now this tale to be true, you would have believed it too; you would believe it now—you would, indeed. Two men look so differently at the same story—one deeply interested that it should be true—one determined, if possible, to find it false. Is it not so?"

Darrell smiled slightly, but could not be induced to assent even to so general a proposition. He felt as if he were pitted against a counsel who would take advantage of every concession.

Waife continued. "And whatever seems most improbable in this confession is rendered probable at once—if—if—we may assume that my unhappy son, tempted by the desire to—to—"

"Spare yourself—I understand—if your son wished to obtain his wife's fortune, and therefore connived at the exchange of the infants, and was therefore, too, enabled always to corroborate the story of the exchange, whenever it suited him to reclaim the infant. I grant this—and I grant that the conjecture is sufficiently plausible to justify you in attaching to it much weight. We will allow that it was his interest at one time to represent his child, though living, as no more; but you must allow also that he would have deemed it his interest, later, to fasten upon me, as my daughter's, a child to whom she never gave birth. Here we entangle ourselves in a controversy without data, without facts. Let us close it. Believe what you please. Why should I shake convictions that render you happy? Be equally forbearing with me. I do full justice to your Sophy's charming qualities. In herself, the proudest parent might rejoice to own her; but I can not acknowledge her to be the daughter of Matilda Darrell. And the story that assured you she was your grandchild, still more convinces me that she is not mine!"

"But be not thus inflexible, I implore you—you can be so kind, so gentle—she would be such a blessing to you! later—perhaps—when I am dead. I am pleading for your sake—I owe you so much! I should repay you, if I could but induce you to inquire—and if inquiry should prove that I am right."

"I have inquired sufficiently."

"Then I'll go and find out the Nurse. I'll question her. I'll—"

"Hold. Be persuaded! Hug your belief! Inquire no farther!"

"Why—why?"

Darrell was mute.

Waife passed and repassed his hand over his brow, and then cried, suddenly, "But if I could prove her not to be my grandchild, then she might be happy!—then—then—ah, Sir, young Haughton tells me that if she were but the daughter of honest parents—no child of Jasper's, no grandchild of mine—then you might not be too proud to bless her at least as his bride! And, Sir, the poor child loves the young man. How could she help it? And, at her age, life without hope is either very short, or very, very long! Let me inquire! I should be happy even to know that she was not my grandchild. I should not love her less; and then she would have others to love her when I am gone to Lizzy!"

Darrell was deeply moved. To him there was something in this old man—ever forgetting himself, ever so hurried on by his heart—something, I say, in this old man, before which Darrell felt his intellect subdued, and his pride silenced and abashed.

"Yes, Sir," said Waife, musingly, "so let it be. I am well now. I will go to France tomorrow."

Darrell nerved his courage. He had wished to spare Waife the pain which his own persua-

sions caused to himself. Better now to be frank. He laid his hand on Waife's shoulder, and, looking him in the face, said, solemnly, "I entreat you not! Do you suppose that I would not resume inquiry in person, nor pause till the truth were made amply clear, if I had not strong reason to prefer doubt to certainty?"

"What do you mean, Sir?"

"There is a woman whose career is, I believe, at this moment revived into fresh notoriety as the heroine of some drama on the stage of Paris—a woman who, when years paled her fame and reft her spoils, as a courtesan renowned for the fools she had beggared, for the young hearts she had corrupted, sought plunder still by crimes, to which law is less lenient. Charged with swindling, with fraud, with forgery, and at last more than suspected as a practiced poisoner, she escaped by suicide the judgment of human tribunals."

"I know of whom you speak—that dreadful Gabrielle Desmarets, but for whom my sacrifice to Jasper's future might not have been in vain! It was to save Sophy from the chance of Jasper's ever placing her within reach of that woman's example that I took her away."

"Is it not, then, better to forbear asking who were your Sophy's parents, than to learn from inquiry that she is indeed your grandchild, and that her mother was Gabrielle Desmarets?"

Waife uttered a cry like a shriek, and then sate voiceless and aghast. At last he exclaimed, "I am certain it is not so! Did you ever see that woman?"

"Never that I know of; but George tells me that he heard your son state to you that she had made acquaintance with me under another name, and if there was a design to employ her in confirmation of his tale—if he was then speaking truth to you, doubtless this was the lady of rank referred to in the Nurse's confession—doubtless this was the woman once palmed upon me as Matilda's *confidante*. In that case I have seen her. What, then?"

"Mother was not written on her face! She could never have been a mother. Oh, you may smile, Sir; but all my life I have been a reader of the human face; and there is in the aspects of some women the barrenness as of stone—no mother's throb in their bosom—no mother's kiss on their lips."

"I am a poor reader of women's faces," said Darrell; "but she must be very unlike women in general, who allows you to know her a bit better if you stood reading her face till doomsday. Besides, at the time you saw Gabrielle Desmarets her mode of life had perhaps given to her an aspect not originally in her countenance. And I can only answer your poetic conceit by a poetic illustration—Niobe turned to stone; but she had a great many daughters before she petrified. Pardon me, if I would turn off by a jest a thought that I see would shock you, as myself, if gravely encouraged. Encourage it not. Let us suppose it only a chance that inquiry might confirm this conjecture; but let us shun that chance. Meanwhile, if inquiry is to be made, one more likely than either of us to get at the truth has promised to make it, and sooner or later we may learn from her the results—I mean that ill-fated Arabella Fosset, whom you knew as Crane."

Waife was silent; but he kept turning in his hand, almost disconsolately, the document which assoiled him from the felon's taint, and said at length, as Darrell was about to leave, "And this thing is of no use to *her*, then?"

Darrell came back to the old man's chair, and said, softly, "Friend, do not fancy that the young have only one path to happiness. You grieve that I can not consent to Lionel's marriage with your Sophy. Dismiss from your mind the desire for the Impossible. Gently wean from hers what is but a girl's first fancy."

"It is a girl's first love."

"And if it be," said Darrell, calmly, "no complaint more sure to yield to change of air. I have known a girl as affectionate, as pure, as full of all womanly virtues, as your Sophy (and I can give her no higher praise)—loved more deeply than Lionel *can* love; professing, doubtless at the time believing, that she also loved for life; betrothed too; faith solemnized by promise; yet in less than a year she was another's wife. Change of air, change of heart! I do not underrate the effect which a young man, so winning as Lionel, would naturally produce on the fancy or the feelings of a girl who as yet, too, has seen no others; but impressions in youth are characters in the sand. Grave them ever so deeply, the tide rolls over them; and when the ebb shows the surface again the characters are gone, for the sands are shifted. Courage! Lady Montfort will present to her others with forms as fair as Lionel's and as elegantly dressed. With so much in her own favor, there are young patricians enough who will care not a rush what her birth—young lords—Lady Montfort knows well how fascinating young lords can be! Courage—before a year is out, you will find new characters written on the sand."

"You don't know Sophy, Sir," said Waife, simply; "and I see you are resolved not to know her. But you say Arabella Crane is to inquire; and should the inquiry prove that she is no child of Gabrielle Desmarets—that she is either your own grandchild or not mine—that—"

"Let me interrupt you. If there be a thing in the world that is cruel and treacherous, it is a false hope! Crush out of every longing thought the belief that this poor girl can prove to be one whom, with my consent, my kinsman can woo to be his wife. Lionel Haughton is the sole kinsman left to whom I can bequeath this roof-tree—these acres, hallowed to me because associated with my earliest lessons in honor, and with the dreams which directed my life. He must take with the heritage the name it represents. In his children, that name of Darrell can alone live still in the land. I say to you, that even were my daughter now in existence, she would not succeed me—she would not inherit nor transmit that name. Why?—not because I am incapable of a Christian's forgiveness, but because I am not capable of a gentleman's treason to his ancestors and himself—because Matilda Darrell was false and perfidious—because she was dead to honor, and therefore her birth-right to a heritage of honor was irrevocably forfeited. And since you compel me to speak rudely, while in you I revere a man above the power of law to degrade—while, could we pass a generation, and Sophy were

your child by your Lizzy, I should proudly welcome an alliance that made you and me brothers—yet I can not contemplate—it is beyond my power—I can not contemplate the picture of Jasper Losely's daughter, even by my own child, the Mistress in my father's home—the bearer of my father's name. 'Tis in vain to argue. Grant me the slave of a prejudice—grant these ideas to be antiquated bigotry—I am too old to change. I ask from others no sacrifice which I have not borne. And whatever be Lionel's grief at my resolve, grief will be my companion long after he has forgotten that he mourned."

CHAPTER IX.

Poor Sophy!

The next morning Mills, in giving Sophy a letter from Lady Montfort, gave her also one for Waife, and she recognized Lionel Haughton's handwriting on the address. She went straight to Waife's sitting-room, for the old man had now resumed his early habits, and was up and dressed. She placed the letter in his hands without a word, and stood by his side while he opened it, with a certain still firmness in the expression of her face, as if she were making up her mind to some great effort. The letter was ostensibly one of congratulation. Lionel had seen Darrell the day before, after the latter had left the Home Secretary's office, and had learned that all which Justice could do to repair the wrong inflicted had been done. *Here* Lionel's words, though brief, were cordial, and almost joyous; but then came a few sentences steeped in gloom. There was an allusion, vague and delicate in itself, to the eventful conversation with Waife in reference to Sophy—a sombre, solemn farewell conveyed to her and to hope—a passionate prayer for her happiness—and then an abrupt wrench, as it were, away from a subject too intolerably painful to prolong—an intimation that he had succeeded in exchanging into a regiment very shortly to be sent into active service; that he should set out the next day to join that regiment in a distant part of the country; and that he trusted, should his life be spared by war, that it would be many years before he should revisit England. The sense of the letter was the more affecting in what was concealed than in what was expressed. Evidently Lionel desired to convey to Waife, and leave it to him to inform Sophy, that she was henceforth to regard the writer as vanished out of her existence—departed, as irrevocably as depart the Dead.

While Waife was reading he had turned himself aside from Sophy; he had risen—he had gone to the deep recess of the old mullion window, half screening himself beside the curtain. Noiselessly Sophy followed; and when he had closed the letter she laid her hand on his arm, and said, very quietly, "Grandfather, may I read that letter?"

Waife was startled, and replied, on the instant, "No, my dear."

"It is better that I should," said she, with the same quiet firmness; and then, seeing the distress in his face, she added, with her more accustomed sweet docility, yet with a forlorn droop of the head, "But as you please, grandfather."

Waife hesitated an instant. Was she not right?—would it not be better to show the letter? After all, she must confront the fact that Lionel could be nothing to her henceforth; and would not Lionel's own words wound her less than all Waife could say? So he put the letter into her hands, and sate down, watching her countenance.

At the opening sentences of congratulation she looked up inquiringly. Poor man! he had not spoken to her of what at another time it would have been such joy to speak; and he now, in answer to her look, said, almost sadly, "Only about *me*, Sophy; what does that matter?" But before the girl read a line farther she smiled on him, and tenderly kissed his furrowed brow.

"Don't read on, Sophy," said he, quickly. She shook her head and resumed. His eye still upon her face, he marked it changing as the sense of the letter grew upon her, till, as, without a word, with scarce a visible heave of the bosom, she laid the letter on his knees, the change had become so complete that it seemed as if Another stood in her place. In very young and sensitive persons, especially female (though I have seen it even in our hard sex), a great and sudden shock or revulsion of feeling reveals itself thus in the almost preternatural alteration of the countenance. It is not a mere paleness—a skin-deep loss of color; it is as if the whole bloom of youth had rushed away; hollows, never discernible before, appear in the cheek that was so round and smooth; the muscles fall as in mortal illness; a havoc, as of years, seems to have been wrought in a moment; Flame itself does not so suddenly ravage—so suddenly alter—leave behind it so ineffable an air of desolation and ruin. Waife sprang forward and clasped her to his breast.

"You will bear it, Sophy! The worst is over now. Fortitude, my child!—fortitude! The human heart is wonderfully sustained when it is not the conscience that weighs it down—griefs that we think at the moment must kill us wear themselves away. I speak the truth, for I too have suffered!"

"Poor grandfather!" said Sophy, gently; and she said no more. But when he would have continued to speak comfort, or exhort to patience, she pressed his hand tightly, and laid her finger on her lip. He was hushed in an instant.

Presently she began to move about the room, busying herself, as usual, in those slight, scarce perceptible arrangements by which she loved to think that she ministered to the old man's simple comforts. She placed the arm-chair in his favorite nook by the window, and before it the footstool for the poor lame foot; and drew the table near the chair, and looked over the books that George had selected for his perusal from Darrell's library; and chose the volume in which she saw his mark to place nearest to his hand, and tenderly cleared the mist from his reading-glass; and removed one or two withered or ailing snow-drops from the little winter nosegay she had gathered for him the day before—he watching her all the time, silent as herself, not daring, indeed, to speak, lest his heart should overflow.

These little tasks of love over, she came toward him a few paces, and said, "Please, dear grandfather, tell me all about what has happened to yourself which should make us glad—that is, by-and-by; but nothing as to the rest of that letter. I will just think over it by myself; but never let us talk of it, grandy dear, never more—never more."

CHAPTER X.

Trees that, like the poplar, lift upward all their boughs, give no shade and no shelter, whatever their height. Trees the most lovingly shelter and shade us, when, like the willow, the higher soar their summits, the lowlier droop their boughs.

USUALLY, when Sophy left Waife in the morning, she would wander out into the grounds, and he could see her pass before his window; or she would look into the library, which was almost exclusively given up to the Morleys, and he could hear her tread on the old creaking stairs. But now she had stolen into her own room, which communicated with his sitting-room—a small lobby alone intervening—and there she remained so long that he grew uneasy. He crept softly to her door and listened. He had a fineness of hearing almost equal to his son's; but he could not hear a sob—not a breath. At length he softly opened the door, and looked in with caution.

The girl was seated at the foot of the bed, quite still—her eyes fixed on the ground, and her finger to her lip, just as she had placed it there when imploring silence; so still, it might be even slumber. All who have grieved respect grief. Waife did not like to approach her; but he said, from his stand at the threshold—"The sun is quite bright now, Sophy; go out for a little while, darling."

She did not look round—she did not stir; but she answered with readiness—"Yes, presently."

So he closed the door, and left her. An hour passed away; he looked in again; there she was still—in the same place, in the same attitude.

"Sophy, dear, it is time to take your walk; go—Mrs. Morley is in front, before my window. I have called to her to wait for you."

"Yes—presently," answered Sophy, and she did not move.

Waife was seriously alarmed. He paused a moment—then went back to his room—took his hat and his staff—came back.

"Sophy, I should like to hobble out and breathe the air; it will do me good. Will you give me your arm? I am still very weak."

Sophy now started—shook back her fair curls—rose—put on her bonnet, and in less than a minute was by the old man's side. Drawing his arm fondly into hers, they descend the stairs; they are in the garden; Mrs. Morley comes to meet them—then George. Waife exerts himself to talk—to be gay—to protect Sophy's abstracted silence, by his own active, desultory, erratic humor. Twice or thrice, as he leans on Sophy's arm, she draws it still nearer to her, and presses it tenderly. She understands—she thanks him. Hark! from some undiscovered hiding-place near the water—Fairthorn's flute! The Music fills the landscape as with a living presence; the swans pause upon the still lake—the tame doe steals through yonder leafless trees; and now, musing and slow, from the same desolate coverts, comes the doe's master. The music spells them all. Guy Darrell sees his guests where they have halted by the stone sun-dial. He advances—joins them—congratulates Waife on his first walk as a convalescent. He quotes Gray's well-known verses applicable to that event,* and when, in that voice sweet as the flute itself, he comes to the lines—

> "The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening paradise"—

Sophy, as if suddenly struck with remorse at the thought that she, and she alone, was marring that opening paradise to the old man in his escape from the sick room to "the sun, the air, the skies," abruptly raised her looks from the ground, and turned them full upon her guardian's face, with an attempt at gladness in her quivering smile, which, whatever its effect on Waife, went straight to the innermost heart of Guy Darrell. On the instant he recognized, as by intuitive sympathy, the anguish from which that smile struggled forth—knew that Sophy had now learned that grief which lay deep within himself—that grief which makes a sick chamber of the whole external world, and which greets no more, in the common boons of Nature, the opening Paradise of recovered Hope! His eye lingered on her face as its smile waned, and perceived that CHANGE which had so startled Waife. Involuntarily he moved to her side—involuntarily drew her arm within his own—she thus supporting the one who cherished—supported by the one who disowned her. Guy Darrell might be stern in resolves which afflicted others, as he was stern in afflicting himself; but for *others* he had at least compassion.

Poor Waife, with nature so different, marked Darrell's movement, and, ever ready to seize on comfort, said inly—"He relents. I will not go to-morrow, as I had intended. Sophy must win her way; who can resist her?"

Talk languished—the wintry sun began to slope—the air grew keen—Waife was led in—the Morleys went up into his room to keep him company—Sophy escaped back to her own. Darrell continued his walk, plunging deep into his maze of beechwoods, followed by the doe. The swans dip their necks among the water-weeds; the flute has ceased, and drearily still is the gray horizon, seen through the skeleton boughs—seen behind the ragged sky-line of shaft and parapet in the skeleton palace.

Darrell does not visit Waife's room that day; he concludes that Waife and Sophy would wish to be much alone; he dreads renewal of the only subject on which he has no cheering word to say. Sophy's smile, Sophy's face haunted him. In vain he repeated to himself—"Tut, it will soon pass—only a girl's first fancy."

But Sophy does not come back to Waife's room when the Morleys have left it; Waife creeps into her room as before, and, as before, there she sits—still as if in slumber. She comes in, however, of her own accord, to assist, as usual, in the meal which he takes apart in his

* "See the wretch who long has tost," etc.—GRAY.

room: helps him—helps herself, but eats nothing. She talks, however, almost gayly; hopes he will be well enough to leave the next day; wonders whether Sir Isaac has missed them very much; reads to him Lady Montfort's affectionate letter to herself; and, when dinner is over, and Waife's chair drawn to the fireside, she takes her old habitual place on the stool beside him, and says—"Now, dear grandfather—all about yourself—what happy thing has chanced to you?"

Alas! poor Waife has but little heart to speak; but he forces himself; what he has to say may do good to her.

"You know that, on my own account, I had reasons for secrecy—change of name. I shunned all those whom I had ever known in former days; could take no calling in life by which I might be recognized; deemed it a blessed mercy of Providence that when, not able to resist offers that would have enabled me to provide for you as I never otherwise could, I assented to hazard an engagement at a London theatre—trusting for my incognito to an actor's arts of disguise—came the accident which, of itself, annihilated the temptation into which I had suffered myself to be led. For, ah child! had it been known who and what was the William Waife whose stage-mime tricks moved harmless mirth, or tears as pleasant, the audience would have risen, not to appland, but hoot—'Off, off,' from both worlds — the Mimic as the Real! Well, had I been dishonest, you—you alone felt that I could not have dared to take you, guiltless infant, by the hand. You remember that, on my return to Rugge's wandering theatre, bringing you with me, I exaggerated the effects of my accident—affected to have lost voice—stipulated to be spared appearing on his stage. That was not the mere pride of manhood shrinking from the display of physical afflictions. No. In the first village that we arrived at I recognized an old friend, and I saw that, in spite of time, and the accident that had disfigured me, he recognized me, and turned away his face, as if in loathing. An old friend, Sophy—an old friend! Oh, it pierced me to the heart; and I resolved, from that day, to escape from Rugge's stage; and I consented, till the means of escape, and some less dependent mode of livelihood were found, to live on thy earnings, child; for if I were discovered by other old friends, and they spoke out, my disgrace would reflect on you, and better to accept support from you than that! Alas! appearances were so strong against me I never deemed they could be cleared away, even from the sight of my nearest friends. But Providence, you know, has been so kind to us hitherto; and so Providence will be kind to us again, Sophy. And now, the very man I thought most hard to me—this very Guy Darrell, under whose roof we are—has been the man to make those whose opinion I most value know that I am not dishonest; and Providence has raised a witness on my behalf in that very Mr. Hartopp who judged me (and any one else might have done the same) too bad to be fit company for you! And that is why I am congratulated; and oh, Sophy! though I have borne it as Heaven does enable us to bear what of ourselves we could not, and though one learns to shrug a patient shoulder under the obloquy which may be heaped on us by that crowd of mere strangers to us and to each other, which is called 'the WORLD,' yet to slink out of sight from a friend, as one more to be shunned than a foe—to take, like a coward, the lashings of scorn—to wince, one raw sore, from the kindness of Pity—to feel that in life the sole end of each shift and contrivance is to slip the view-hallo, into a grave without epitaph, by paths as stealthy and sly as the poor hunted fox, when his last chance—and sole one—is, by winding and doubling, to run under the earth; to know that it would be an ungrateful imposture to take chair at the board—at the hearth, of the man who, unknowing your secret, says—'Friend, be social;' accepting not a crust that one does not pay for, lest one feel a swindler to the kind fellow-creature whose equal we must not be!—all this—all this, Sophy, did at times chafe and gall more than I ought to have let it do, considering that there was ONE who saw it all, and would—Don't cry, Sophy; it is all over now."

"Not cry! Oh, it does me so much good!"

"All over now! I am under this roof—without shame or scruple; and if Guy Darrell, knowing all my past, has proved my innocence in the eyes of those whom alone I cared for, I feel as if I had the right to stand before any crowd of men erect and shameless—a Man once more with Men! Oh, darling, let me but see thy old happy smile again! The happy smiles of the young are the sunshine of the old. Be patient—be firm; Providence is so very kind, Sophy."

CHAPTER XI.

Waife exacts from George Morley the fulfillment of one of those promises which mean nothing or every thing.

THE next day George Morley visited Waife's room earlier than usual. Waife had sent for him. Sophy was seated by her grandfather—his hand in hers. She had been exerting herself to the utmost to talk cheerfully—to shake from her aspect every cloud of sorrow. But still THAT CHANGE was there—more marked than even on the previous day. A few hours of intense struggle, a single night wholly without sleep, will tell on the face of early youth. Not till we, hard veterans, have gone through such struggles as life permits not to the slight responsibilities of new recruits—not till sleepless nights have grown to us familiar—will Thought seem to take, as it were, strength, not exhaustion, from unrelaxing exercise—nourish the brain, sustain the form by its own untiring, fleshless, spiritual immortality; not till many a winter has stripped the leaves; not till deep, and far out of sight, spread the roots that support the stem—will the beat of the east wind leave no sign on the rind.

George had not, indeed, so noticed the day before the kind of withering blight that had passed over the girl's countenance; but he did now—when she met his eye more steadfastly, and had resumed something of the open genial infantine grace of manner which constituted her peculiar charm, and which it was difficult to associate with deeper griefs than those of childhood.

"You must scold my grandfather," she said.

"He chooses to fancy that he is not well enough yet to leave; and I am sure that he is, and will recover more quickly at home than here."

"Pooh!" said Waife; "you young things suppose we old folks can be as brisk as yourselves; but if I am to be scolded, leave Mr. George unawed by your presence, and go out, my dear, while the sun lasts; I know by the ways of that blackbird that the day will be overcast by noon."

As soon as they were alone, George said, abruptly, "Your Sophy is looking very ill, and, if you are well enough to leave, it might be better for her to move from this gloomy house. Movement itself is a great restorative," added George, with emphasis.

"You see, then, that she looks ill—very ill," said Waife, deliberately; "and there is that in your manner which tells me you guess the cause."

"I do guess it, from the glimpse which I caught of Lionel's face after he had been closeted a short time with Mr. Darrell at my uncle's house two days ago. I guess it also from a letter I have received from my uncle."

"You guess right—very right," said Waife, still with the same serious, tranquil manner. "I showed her this letter from young Haughton. Read it." George hurried his eye over the letter, and returned it silently. Waife proceeded.

"I was frightened yesterday by the strange composure she showed. In her face alone could be read what she suffered. We talked last night. I spoke of myself—of my old sorrows—in order to give her strength to support hers; and the girl has a heroic nature, Mr. George—and she is resolved to conquer or to die. But she will not conquer."

George began the usual strain of a consoler in such trials. Waife stopped him. "All that you can say, Mr. George, I know beforehand; and she will need no exhortation to prayer and to fortitude. I stole from my room when it was almost dawn. I saw light under the door of her chamber. I just looked in—softly—unperceived. She had not gone to bed. She was by the open window—stars dying out of the sky—kneeling on the floor, her face buried in her hands. She has prayed. In her soul, at this moment, be sure that she is praying now. She will devote herself to me—she will be cheerful—you will hear her laugh, Mr. George: but she will not conquer in this world; long before the new year is out she will be looking down upon our grief with her bright smile; but we shall not see her, Mr. George. Do not think this is an old man's foolish terror; I know sorrow as physicians know disease; it has its mortal symptoms. Hush! hear me out. I have one hope—it is in you."

"In me?"

"Yes. Do you remember that you said, if I could succeed in opening to your intellect its fair career, you would be the best friend to me man ever had; and I said, 'Agreed, but change the party in the contract; befriend my Sophy instead of me, and, if ever I ask you, help me in aught for her welfare and happiness;' and you said, 'With heart and soul.' That was the bargain, Mr. George. Now, you have all that you then despaired of; you have the dignity of your sacred calling—you have the eloquence of the preacher. I can not cope with Mr. Darrell—you can. He has a heart—it can be softened; he has a soul—it can be freed from the withes that tether it down; he has the virtues you can appeal to; and he has the pride which you, as a Christian minister, have the right to prove to be a sin. I can not argue with him; I can not reprove the man to whom I owe so much. All ranks of men and of mind should be equal to you, the pastor, the divine. You ministers of the Gospel address yourselves unabashed to the poor, the humble, the uninstructed. Did Heaven give you power and commandment over these alone? Go, Preacher! go! Speak with the same authority to the great, to the haughty, to the wise!"

The old man's look and gesture were sublime.

The Preacher felt a thrill vibrate from his ear to his heart; but his reason was less affected than his heart. He shook his head mournfully. The task thus assigned to him was beyond the limits which custom prescribes to the priest of the English Church — dictation to a man not even of his own flock, upon the closest affairs of that man's own private hearth and home! Our society allows no such privilege; and our society is right.

Waife, watching his countenance, saw at once what was passing in his mind, and resumed, as if answering George's own thought.

"Ay, if you were but the commonplace priest! But you are something more; you are the priest specially endowed for all special purposes of good. You have the mind to reason—the tongue to persuade—the majestic earnestness of impassioned zeal. Nor are you here the priest alone; you are here the friend, the confidant, of all for whom you may exert your powers. Oh, George Morley, I am a poor ignorant blunderer when presuming to exhort you as Christian minister; but in your own words—I address you as man and gentleman—you declared that 'thought and zeal should not stammer whenever I said—Keep your promise.' I say it now—Keep faith to the child you swore to me to befriend!"

"I will go—and at once," said George, rising. "But be not sanguine. I see not a chance of success. A man so superior to myself in years, station, abilities, repute!"

"Where would be Christianity," said Waife, "if the earliest preachers had raised such questions? There is a soldier's courage—is there not a priest's?"

George made no answer, but, with abstracted eye, gathered brow, and slow meditative step, quitted the room, and sought Guy Darrell.

BOOK XII.

CHAPTER I.

The man of the World shows more indifference to the things and doctrines of the World than might be supposed.—But he vindicates his character, which might otherwise be jeopardized, by the adroitness with which, having resolved to roast chestnuts in the ashes of another man's hearth, he handles them when hottest by the proxy of a—Cat's paw.

In the letter which George told Waife he had received from his uncle, George had an excuse for the delicate and arduous mission he undertook, which he did not confide to the old man, lest it should convey more hopes than its nature justified. In this letter Alban related, with a degree of feeling that he rarely manifested, his farewell conversation with Lionel, who had just departed to join his new regiment. The poor young man had buoyed himself up with delighted expectations of the result of Sophy's prolonged residence under Darrell's roof; he had persuaded his reason that when Darrell had been thus enabled to see and judge of her for himself, he would be irresistibly attracted toward her; that Innocence, like Truth, would be mighty and prevail;—Darrell was engaged in the attempt to clear William Losely's name and blood from the taint of felony;—Alban was commissioned to negotiate with Jasper Losely on any terms that would remove all chance of future disgrace from that quarter. Oh yes! to poor Lionel's eyes, obstacles vanished—the future became clear. And thus, when, after telling him of his final interview with the minister, Darrell said, "I trust that, in bringing to William Losely this intelligence, I shall at least soften his disappointment, when I make it thoroughly clear to him how impossible it is that his Sophy can ever be more to me—to *us*—than a stranger whose virtues create an interest in her welfare"—Lionel was stunned as by a blow. Scarcely could he murmur—

"You have seen her—and your resolve remains the same."

"Can you doubt it?" answered Darrell, as if in surprise. "The resolve may now give me pain on my account, as before it gave me pain on yours. But if not moved by your pain, can I be moved by mine? *That* would be a baseness."

The Colonel, in depicting Lionel's state of mind after the young soldier had written his farewell to Waife, and previous to quitting London, expressed very gloomy forebodings: "I do not say," wrote he, "that Lionel will guiltily seek death in the field, nor does death there come more to those who seek than to those who shun it; but he will go upon a service exposed to more than ordinary suffering, privation, and disease—without that rallying power of hope—that Will and Desire to Live, which constitute the true stamina of Youth. And I have always set a black mark upon those who go into war joyless and despondent. Send a young fellow to the camp with his spirits broken, his heart heavy as a lump of lead, and the first of those epidemics which thin ranks more than the cannon says to itself, 'There is a man for me!' Any doctor will tell you that, even at home, the gay and light-hearted walk safe through the pestilence, that settles on the moping as malaria settles on a marsh. Confound Guy Darrell's ancestors, they have spoiled Queen Victoria as good a young soldier as ever wore sword by his side. Six months ago, and how blithely Lionel Haughton looked forth to the future!—all laurel!—no cypress! And now, I feel as if I had shaken hands with a victim sacrificed by Superstition to the tombs of the dead. I can not blame Darrell: I dare say in the same position I might do the same. But no; on second thoughts I should not! If Darrell does not choose to marry and have sons of his own, he has no right to load a poor boy with benefits, and say, 'There is but one way to prove your gratitude; remember my ancestors, and be miserable for the rest of your days!' Darrell, forsooth, intends to leave to Lionel the transmission of the old Darrell name; and the old Darrell name must not be tarnished by the marriage on which Lionel has unluckily set his heart! I respect the old name; but it is not like the House of Vipont—a British Institution. And if some democratical cholera, which does not care a rush for old names, carries off Lionel, what becomes of the old name then? Lionel is not Darrell's son; Lionel need not, perforce, take the old name. Let the young man live as Lionel Haughton, and the old name die with Guy Darrell!

"As to the poor girl's birth and parentage, I believe we shall never know them. I quite agree with Darrell that it will be wisest never to inquire. But I dismiss, as far-fetched and improbable, his supposition that she is Gabrielle Desmaret's daughter. To me it is infinitely more likely, either that the deposition of the Nurse, which poor Willy gave to Darrell, and which Darrell showed to me, is true (only, that Jasper was conniving at the temporary suspension of his child's existence while it suited his purpose)—or that, at the worst, this mysterious young lady is the daughter of the *artiste*. In the former supposition, as I have said over and over again, a marriage between Lionel and Sophy is precisely that which Darrell should desire; in the latter case, of course, if Lionel were the head of the House of Vipont, the idea of such a union would be inadmissible. But Lionel, *entre nous*, is the son of a ruined spendthrift by a linen-draper's daughter. And Darrell has but to give the handsome young couple five or six thousand a year, and I know the world well enough to know that the world will trouble itself very little about their pedigrees. And really Lionel should be left wholly free to choose whether he prefer a girl whom he loves with his whole heart, five or six thousand a year, happiness, and the chance of honors in a glorious profession to which he

will then look with glad spirits—or a life-long misery, with the right, after Darrell's death—that I hope will not be these thirty years—to bear the name of Darrell instead of Haughton; which, if I were the last of the Haughtons, and had any family pride—as, thank Heaven, I have not—would be a painful exchange to me; and dearly-bought by the addition of some additional thousands a year, when I had grown perhaps as little disposed to spend them as Guy Darrell himself is. But, after all, there is one I compassionate even more than young Haughton. My morning rides of late have been much in the direction of Twickenham, visiting our fair cousin Lady Montfort. I went first to lecture her for letting these young people see so much of each other. But my anger melted into admiration and sympathy when I found with what tender, exquisite, matchless friendship she had been all the while scheming for Darrell's happiness; and with what remorse she now contemplated the sorrow which a friendship so grateful, and a belief so natural, had innocently occasioned. That remorse is wearing her to death. Dr. F——, who attended poor dear Willy, is also attending her; and he told me privately that his skill was in vain—that her case baffled him; and he had very serious apprehensions. Darrell owes some consideration to such a friend. And to think that here are lives permanently imbittered, if not risked, by the ruthless obstinacy of the best-hearted man I ever met! Now, though I have already intimated my opinions to Darrell with a candor due to the oldest and dearest of my friends, yet I have never, of course, in the letters I have written to him, or the talk we have had together, spoken out as plainly as I do in writing to you. And having thus written, without awe of his gray eye and dark brow, I have half a mind to add—'seize him in a happy moment and show him this letter.' Yes, I give you full leave; show it to him if you think it would avail. If not, throw it into the fire, and pray Heaven for those whom we poor mortals can not serve."

On the envelope Alban had added these words—"But, of course, before showing the inclosed, you will prepare Darrell's mind to weigh its contents." And probably it was in that curt and simple injunction that the subtle man of the world evinced the astuteness of which not a trace was apparent in the body of his letter.

Though Alban's communication had much excited his nephew, yet George had not judged it discreet to avail himself of the permission to show it to Darrell. It seemed to him that the pride of his host would take much more offense at its transmission through the hands of a third person than at the frank tone of its reasonings and suggestions. And George had determined to reinclose it to the Colonel, urging him to forward it himself to Darrell just as it was, with but a brief line to say, "that, on reflection, Alban submitted, direct to his old school-fellow, the reasonings and apprehensions which he had so unreservedly poured forth in a letter commenced without the intention at which the writer arrived at the close." But now that the preacher had undertaken the duty of an advocate the letter became his brief.

George passed through the library, through the study, up the narrow stair that finally conducted to the same lofty cell in which Darrell had confronted the midnight robber who claimed a child in Sophy. With a nervous hand George knocked at the door.

Unaccustomed to any intrusion on the part of guest or household in that solitary retreat, somewhat sharply, as if in anger, Darrell's voice answered the knock.

"Who's there?"

"George Morley."

Darrell opened the door.

CHAPTER II.

"A good archer is not known by his arrows, but his aim." "A good man is no more to be feared than a sheep." "A good surgeon must have an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand." "A good tongue is a good weapon." And despite those suggestive or encouraging proverbs, George Morley has undertaken something so opposed to all proverbial philosophy, that it becomes a grave question what he will do with it.

"I come," said George, "to ask you one of the greatest favors a man can confer upon another; it will take some little time to explain. Are you at leisure?"

Darrell's brow relaxed.

"Seat yourself in comfort, my dear George. If it be in my power to serve or to gratify Alban Morley's nephew, it is I who receive a favor." Darrell thought to himself, "the young man is ambitious—I may aid in his path toward a See!"

George Morley. "First let me say that I would consult your intellect on a matter which habitually attracts and engages mine—that old vexed question of the origin and uses of Evil, not only in the physical, but the moral world; it involves problems over which I would ponder for hours as a boy—on which I wrote essays as a schoolman—on which I perpetually collect illustrations to fortify my views as a theologian."

"He is writing a Book," thought Darrell, enviously; "and a book on such a subject will last him all his life. Happy man!"

George Morley. "The Pastor, you know, is frequently consulted by the suffering and oppressed; frequently called upon to answer that question in which the skepticism of the humble and the ignorant ordinarily begins—'Why am I suffering? Why am I oppressed? Is this the justice of Providence? Has the Great Father that benign pity, that watchful care for his children which you preachers tell us?' Ever intent on deducing examples from the lives to which the clew has become apparent, must be the Priest who has to reason with Affliction caused by no apparent fault; and where, judged by the canons of Human justice, cloud and darkness obscure the Divine—still to 'vindicate the ways of God to man.'"

Darrell. "A philosophy that preceded, and will outlive, all other schools. It is twin-born with the world itself. Go on; though the theme be inexhaustible, its interest never flags."

George Morley. "Has it struck you, Mr. Darrell, that few lives have ever passed under your survey in which the inexpressible tenderness of the Omniscient has been more visibly clear than in that of your guest William Losely?"

DARRELL (surprised). "Clear? To me, I confess that if ever there were an instance in which the Divine tenderness, the Divine justice, which I can never presume to doubt, was yet undiscernible to my bounded vision, it is in the instance of the very life you refer to. I see a man of admirable virtues—of a childlike simplicity of character, which makes him almost unconscious of the grandeur of his own soul—involved by a sublime self-sacrifice—by a virtue, not by a fault—in the most dreadful of human calamities—ignominious degradation;—hurled in the mid-day of life from the sphere of honest men—a felon's brand on his name—a vagrant in his age; justice at last, but tardy and niggard, and giving him but little joy when it arrives; because, ever thinking only of others, his heart is wrapped in a child whom he can not make happy in the way in which his hopes have been set!—George—no, your illustration might be turned by a skeptic into an argument against you."

GEORGE MORLEY. "Not unless the skeptic refused the elementary starting-ground from which you and I may reason; not if it be granted that Man has a soul, which it is the object of this life to enrich and develop for another. We know from my uncle what William Losely was before this calamity befell him—a genial boon-companion—a careless, frank, 'good fellow'—all the virtues you now praise in him dormant, unguessed even by himself. Suddenly came CALAMITY!—suddenly arose the SOUL! Degradation of name, and with it dignity of nature? How poor, how slight, how insignificant William Losely, the hanger-on of rural Thanes, compared with that William Waife whose entrance into this house, you—despite that felon's brand when you knew it was the martyr's glory—greeted with noble reverence: whom, when the mind itself was stricken down—only the soul left to the wreck of the body—you tended with such pious care as he lay on your father's bed! And do you, who hold Nobleness in such honor—do you, of all men, tell me that you can not recognize that Celestial tenderness which ennobled a Spirit for all Eternity?"

"George, you are right!" cried Darrell; "and I was a blockhead and blunderer, as man always is when he mistakes a speck in his telescope for a blotch in the sun of a system."

GEORGE MORLEY. "But more difficult it is to recognize the mysterious agencies of Heavenly Love when no great worldly adversity forces us to pause and question. Let Fortune strike down a victim, and even the heathen cries 'This is the hand of God!' But where Fortune brings no vicissitude; where her wheel runs smooth, dropping wealth or honors as it rolls—where Affliction centres its work within the secret, unrevealing heart—there, even the wisest man may not readily perceive by what means Heaven is admonishing, forcing, or wooing him nearer to itself. I take the case of a man in whom Heaven acknowledges a favored son. I assume his outward life crowned with successes, his mind stored with opulent gifts, his nature endowed with lofty virtues; what an heir to train through the brief school of earth for due place in the ages that roll on forever! But this man has a parasite weed in each bed of a soul rich in flowers; weed and flowers intertwined, stem with stem—their fibres uniting even deep down to the root. Can you not conceive with what untiring vigilant care Heaven will seek to disentangle the flower from the weed?—how (dropping inadequate metaphor) Heaven will select for its warning chastisements that very error which the man has so blent with his virtues that he holds it a virtue itself?—how, gradually, slowly, pertinaciously, it will gather this beautiful nature all to itself—insist on a sacrifice it would ask from no other? To complete the true nature of poor William Losely, Heaven ordained the sacrifice of worldly repute; to complete the true nature of Guy Darrell, God ordains him the sacrifice of PRIDE!"

Darrell started—half rose; his eye flashed—his cheek paled; but he remained silent.

"I have approached the favor I supplicate," resumed George, drawing a deep breath, as of relief. "Greater favor man can scarcely bestow upon his fellow. I entreat you to believe that I respect, and love, and honor you sufficiently to be for a while so lifted up into your friendship, that I may claim the privilege, without which friendship is but a form—just as no freedom is more obnoxious than intrusion on confidence withheld, so no favor, I repeat, more precious than the confidence which a man of worth vouchsafes to him who invites it with no claim but the loyalty of his motives."

Said Darrell, softened, but with stateliness—"All human lives are as separate circles; they may touch at one point in friendly approach, but, even where they touch, each rounds itself from off the other. With this hint I am contented to ask at what point in my circle you would touch?"

GEORGE MORLEY. "I thank you gratefully; I accept your illustration. The point is touched; I need no other." He paused a moment, as if concentrating all his thoughts, and then said, with musing accents—"Yes, I accept your illustration; I will even strengthen the force of the truth implied in it by a more homely illustration of my own. There are small skeleton abridgments of history which we give to children. In such a year a king was crowned—a battle was fought; there was some great disaster, or some great triumph. Of the true progress and development of the nation whose record is thus epitomized—of the complicated causes which lead to these salient events—of the animated, varied, multitudinous life which has been hurrying on from epoch to epoch, the abridgment tells nothing. It is so with the life of each individual man; the life as it stands before us is but a sterile epitome—hid from our sight the emotions which are the People of the Heart. In such a year occurred a visible something—a gain—a loss—a success—a disappointment; the People of the Heart crowned or deposed a king. This is all we know; and the most voluminous biography ever written must still be a meagre abridgment of all that really individualized and formed a man. I ask not your confidence in a single detail or fact in your existence which lies beyond my sight. Far from me so curious an insolence; but I do ask you this—Reflecting on your past life as a whole, have not your chief sorrows had a common idiosyncrasy? Have they not been strangely directed toward the

frustration of some one single object—cherished by your earliest hopes, and, as if in defiance of fate, resolutely clung to even now?"

"It is true," muttered Darrell. "You do not offend me; go on!"

"And have not these SORROWS, in frustrating your object, often assumed, too, a certain uniformity in the weapons they use, in the quarter they harass or invade, almost as if it were a strategic policy that guided them where they could most pain, or humble, or eject a FOE that they were ordered to storm? Degrade you they could not; such was not their mission. Heaven left you intact a kingliness of nature—a loftiness of spirit, unabased by assaults leveled not against yourself, but your pride; your personal dignity, though singularly sensitive, though bitterly galled, stood proof. What might lower lesser men, lowered not you; Heaven left you that dignity, for it belongs alike to your intellect and your virtues—but suffered it to be a source of your anguish. Why? Because not content with adorning your virtues, it was covering the fault against which were directed the sorrows. You frown—forgive me."

"You do not transgress unless it be as a flatterer! If I frowned, it was unconsciously—the sign of thought, not anger. Pause!—my mind has left you for a moment; it is looking into the past."

The past!—Was it not true! That home to whose porch came in time the Black Horses, in time just to save from the last, worst dishonor, but not save from years racked by each pang that can harrow man's dignity in each daily assault on the fort of man's pride; the sly, treacherous daughter—her terrible marriage—the man whose disgrace she had linked to her blood, and whose life still was insult and threat to his own. True, what a war upon Pride! And even in that secret and fatal love which had been of all his griefs the most influential and enduring, had his pride been less bitterly wounded, and that pride less enthroned in his being, would his grief have been so relentless, his attempts at its conquest so vain? And then, even now—what was it said, "I can bless"—holy LOVE! What was it said, "but not pardon"—stern PRIDE! And so on to these last revolutions of sterile life. Was he not miserable in Lionel's and Sophy's misery? Forlorn in that Citadel of Pride—closed round and invested with Sorrows—and the last Hopes that had fled to the fortress, slain in defense of its outworks. With hand shading his face, Darrell remained some minutes silent. At last he raised his head, and his eye was steadfast, his lip firm.

"George Morley," said he, "I acknowledge much justice in the censure you have conveyed, with so artful a delicacy, that if it fail to reform it can not displease, and leaves much to be seriously revolved in solitary self-commune. But though I may own that pride is not made for man, and that in the blindness of human judgment I may often have confounded pride with duty, and suffered for the mistake, yet that one prevailing object of my life, which with so startling a truth you say it has pleased Heaven to frustrate, I can not hold an error in itself. You have learned enough from your uncle, seen enough of me yourself, to know what that object has been. You are scholar enough to concede to me that it is no ignoble homage which either nations or persons render to the ancestral Dead—that homage is an instinct in all but vulgar and sordid natures. Has a man no ancestry of his own, rightly and justly, if himself of worth, he appropriates to his lineage all the heroes, and bards, and patriots of his fatherland? A free citizen has ancestors in all the glorious chiefs that have adorned the state, on the sole condition that he shall revere their tombs, and guard their memory as a son! And thus, whenever they who speak trumpet-tongued to grand democracies, would rouse some quailing generation to heroic deed or sacrifice, they appeal in the Name of Ancestors, and call upon the living to be worthy of the dead! That which is so laudable—nay, so necessary a sentiment in the mass, can not be a fault that angers Heaven in the man. Like all high sentiments, it may compel harsh and rugged duties; it may need the stern suppression of many a gentle impulse—of many a pleasing wish. But we must regard it in its merit and consistency as a whole. And if, my eloquent and subtle friend, all you have hitherto said be designed but to wind into pleas for the same cause that I have already decided against the advocate in my own heart which sides with Lionel's generous love and yon fair girl's ingenuous and touching grace, let us break up the court: the judge has no choice but the law which imperiously governs his judgment."

GEORGE MORLEY. "I have not hitherto presumed to apply to particular cases the general argument you so indulgently allow me to urge in favor of my theory, that in the world of the human heart, when closely examined, there is the same harmony of design as in the external universe; that in Fault and in Sorrow are the axioms, and problems, and postulates of a SCIENCE. Bear with me a little longer if I still pursue the same course of reasoning. I shall not have the arrogance to argue a special instance—to say, 'This you should do, this you should not do.' All I would ask is, leave to proffer a few more suggestions to your own large and candid experience."

Said Darrell, irresistibly allured on, but with a tinge of his grave irony, "You have the true genius of the pulpit, and I concede to you its rights. I will listen with the wish to profit—the more susceptible of conviction, because freed from the necessity to reply."

GEORGE MORLEY. "You vindicate the object which has been the main ambition of your life. You say 'not an ignoble object.' Truly! ignoble objects are not for you. The question is, are there not objects nobler, which should have attained higher value, and led to larger results in the soul which Providence assigned to you; was not the proper place of the object you vindicate that of an auxiliary—a subordinate, rather than that of the all-directing self-sufficing leader and autocrat of such various powers of mind? I picture you to myself—a lone, bold-hearted boy—in this ancient hall, amidst these primitive landscapes, in which old associations are so little disturbed by the modern—in which the wild turf of waste lands, vanishing deep into mazes of solemn wood, lend the scene to dreams of gone days—bring Adventure and Knighthood, and all the poetical

colors of Eld to unite the homage due to the ancestral dead with the future ambition of life;—Image full of interest and of pathos—a friendless child of a race more beloved for its decay, looking dauntless on to poverty and toil, with that conviction of power which is born of collected purpose and earnest will; and recording his secret vow, that single-handed he will undo the work of destroying ages, and restore his line to its place of honor in the land!"

George paused, and tears stood in Darrell's eyes.

"Yes," resumed the scholar—"yes, for the child, for the youth, for the man in his first daring stride into the Action of Life, that object commands our respectful sympathies. But wait a few years. Has that object expanded? Has it led on into objects embracing humanity? Remains it alone and sterile in the bosom of successful genius? Or is it prolific and fruitful of grander designs—of more wide-spreading uses? Make genius successful, and all men have the right to say, 'Brother, help us!' What! no other object still but to build up a house!—to recover a line! What was grand at one stage of an onward career is narrow and small at another! Ambition limited to the rise of a family! Can our sympathies still hallow *that!* No! In Guy Darrell successful—that ambition was treason to earth! Mankind was his family now! THEREFORE Heaven thwarted the object which opposed its own ends in creating you! THEREFORE childless you stand on your desolate hearth!—THEREFORE, lo! side by side —yon uncompleted pile—your own uncompleted life!"

Darrell sate dumb.—He was appalled!

GEORGE MORLEY. "Has not that object stinted your very intellect? Has it not, while baffled in its own centred aim—has it not robbed you of the glory which youth craved, and which manhood might have won? Idolater to the creed of an Ancestor's NAME, has your own name that hold on the grateful respect of the Future which men ever give to that genius whose objects are knit with mankind? Suddenly, in the zenith of life, amidst cheers, not of genuine renown—cheers loud and brief as a mob's hurrah—calamities, all of which I know not nor conjecture, interrupt your career; and when your own life-long object is arrested, or rather when it is snatched from your eye, your genius renounces all uses. Fame, ever-during, was before you still, had your objects been those for which genius is given. You muse. Heaven permits these rude words to strike home! Guy Darrell, it is not too late! Heaven's warnings are always in time! Reflect, with the one narrow object was fostered and fed the one master failing of Pride. To us, as Christians or as reasoners, it is not in this world that every duty is to find its special meed; yet by that same mystical LAW which makes Science of Sorrow, rewards are but often the normal effect of duties sublimely fulfilled. Out of your pride and your one-cherished object has there grown happiness? Has the success which was not denied you achieved the link with posterity that your hand, if not fettered, would long since have forged? Grant that Heaven says, 'Stubborn child, yield at last to the warnings that came from my love! From a son so favored and strong I exact the most difficult offering! Thou hast sacrificed much, but for ends not prescribed in my law; sacrifice now to me the thing thou most clingest to—Pride. I make the pang I demand purposely bitter. I twine round the offering I ask the fibres that bleed in relaxing. What to other men would be no duty is duty to thee, because it entails a triumphant self-conquest, and pays to Humanity the arrears of just dues long neglected.' Grant the hard sacrifice made; I must think Heaven has ends for your joy even here, when it asks you to part with the cause of your sorrows; I must think that your evening of life may have sunshine denied to its noon. But with God are no bargains. A virtue, the more arduous because it must trample down what your life has exalted as virtue, is before you—distasteful, austere, repellant. The most inviting arguments in its favor are that it proffers no bribes; men would acquit you in rejecting it; judged by our world's ordinary rule, men would be right in acquitting you. But if, on reflection, you say in your heart of hearts, 'This *is* a virtue,' you will follow its noiseless path up to the smile of God!"

The Preacher ceased.

Darrell breathed a long sigh, rose slowly, took George's hand, pressed it warmly in both his own, and turned quickly and silently away. He paused in the deep recess, where the gleam of the wintry sun shot through the small casement, aslant and pale, on the massive wall. Opening the lattice, he looked forth on the old hereditary trees—on the Gothic church-tower—on the dark evergreens that belted his father's tomb. Again he sighed, but this time the sigh had a haughty sound in its abrupt impatience; and George felt that words written must remain to strengthen and confirm the effect of words spoken. He had at least obeyed his uncle's wise injunction —he had prepared Darrell's mind to weigh the contents of a letter, which, given in the first instance, would perhaps have rendered Darrell's resolution not less stubborn, by increasing the pain to himself which the resolution already inflicted.

Darrell turned, and looked toward George, as if in surprise to see him still lingering there.

"I have now but to place before you this letter from my uncle to myself; it enters into those details which it would have misbecome me specially to discuss. Remember, I entreat you, in reading it, that it is written by your oldest friend —by a man who has no dull discrimination in the perplexities of life, or the niceties of honor."

Darrell bowed his head in assent, and took the letter. George was about to leave the room.

"Stay," said Darrell, "'tis best to have but one interview—one conversation on the subject which has been just enforced on me; and the letter may need a comment, or a message to your uncle." He stood hesitating, with the letter open in his hand; and, fixing his keen eye on George's pale and powerful countenance, said, "How is it that, with an experience of mankind, which you will pardon me for assuming to be limited, you yet read so wondrously the complicated human heart?"

"If I really have that gift," said George, "I will answer your question by another: Is it

through experience that we learn to read the human heart—or is it through sympathy? If it be experience, what becomes of the Poet? If the Poet be born, not made, is it not because he is born to sympathize with what he has never experienced?"

"I see! There are born Preachers!"

Darrell reseated himself, and began Alban's letter. He was evidently moved by the Colonel's account of Lionel's grief—muttering to himself, "Poor boy!—but he is brave—he is young." When he came to Alban's forebodings, on the effects of dejection upon the stamina of life, he pressed his hand quickly against his breast as if he had received a shock! He mused a while before he resumed his task; then he read rapidly and silently till his face flushed, and he repeated in a hollow tone, inexpressibly mournful, "'Let the young man live, and the old name die with Guy Darrell.' Ay, ay! see how the world sides with Youth! What matters all else so that Youth have its toy!" Again his eye hurried on impatiently till he came to the passage devoted to Lady Montfort; then George saw that the paper trembled violently in his hand, and that his very lips grew white. "'Serious apprehensions,'" he muttered. "I owe 'consideration to such a friend.' This man is without a heart!"

He clenched the paper in his hand without reading farther. "Leave me this letter, George; I will give an answer to that and to you before night." He caught up his hat as he spoke, passed into the lifeless picture-gallery, and so out into the open air. George, dubious and anxious, gained the solitude of his own room, and locked the door.

CHAPTER III.

At last, the great Question by Torture is fairly applied to Guy Darrell.

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT? What will Guy Darrell do with the thought that weighs on his brain, rankles in his heart, perplexes his dubious conscience? What will he do with the Law which has governed his past life? What will he do with that shadow of A NAME, which, alike in swarming crowds or in lonely burial-places, has spelled his eye and lured his step as a beckoning ghost? What will he do with the PRIDE from which the mask has been so rudely torn? What will he do with idols so long revered? *Are* they idols, or are they but symbols and images of holy truths? What will he do with the torturing problem, on the solution of which depend the honor due to consecrated ashes, and the rights due to beating hearts? There, restless he goes, the arrow of that question in his side—now through the broad waste lands—now through the dim woods, pausing oft with short quick sigh, with hand swept across his brow as if to clear away a cloud;—now snatched from our sight by the evergreens round the tomb in that still church-yard—now emerging slow, with melancholy eyes fixed on the old roof-tree! What will he do with it? The Question of Questions in which all Futurity is opened, has him on its rack. WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT? Let us see.

CHAPTER IV.

Immunis aram, si tetigit manus,
Non sumptuosa blandior hostia,
Mollivit aversas Penates,
Farre pio et saliente mica.—HORAT.

IT is the gray of the evening. Fairthorn is sauntering somewhat sullenly along the banks of the lake. He has missed, the last three days, his walk with Sophy—missed the pleasing excitement of talking *at* her, and *of* the family in whose obsolete glories he considers her very interest an obtrusive impertinence. He has missed, too, his more habitual and less irritating conversation with Darrell. In short, altogether he is put out, and he vents his spleen on the swans, who follow him along the wave as he walks along the margin, intimating either their affection for himself, or their anticipation of the bread crumbs associated with his image—by the amiable note, half snort and half grunt, to which change of time or climate has reduced the vocal accomplishments of those classical birds, so pathetically melodious in the age of Moschus and on the banks of Cayster.

"Not a crumb, you unprincipled beggars," growled the musician. "You imagine that mankind are to have no other thought but that of supplying you with luxuries! And if you were asked, in a competitive examination, to define ME, your benefactor, you would say—'A thing very low in the scale of creation, without wings or even feathers, but which Providence endowed with a peculiar instinct for affording nutritious and palatable additions to the ordinary aliment of Swans!' Ay, you may grunt; I wish I had you—in a pie!"

Slowly, out through the gap between yon gray crag and the thorn-tree, paces the doe, halting to drink just where the faint star of eve shoots its gleam along the wave. The musician forgets the swans and quickens his pace, expecting to meet the doe's wonted companion. He is not disappointed. He comes on Guy Darrell where the twilight shadow falls darkest between the gray crag and the thorn-tree.

"Dear Fellow Hermit," said Darrell, almost gayly, yet with more than usual affection in his greeting and voice, "you find me just when I want you. I am as one whose eyes have been strained by a violent conflict of colors, and your quiet presence is like the relief of a return to green. I have news for you, Fairthorn. You, who know more of my secrets than any other man, shall be the first to learn a decision that must bind you and me more together—but not in these scenes, Dick.

'Ibimus—ibimus!
————Supremum
Carpere iter, comites, parati!'"

"What do you mean, Sir?" asked Fairthorn. "My mind always misgives me when I hear you quoting Horace. Some reflection about the certainty of death, or other disagreeable subjects is sure to follow!"

"Death! No, Dick—not now. Marriage-bells and joy, Dick! We shall have a wedding!"

"What! You will marry at last! And it must be that beautiful Caroline Lyndsay! It must—it must! You can never love another! You know it, my dear, dear master! I shall see you, then, happy before I die."

"Tut, foolish old friend!" said Darrell, leaning his arm tenderly on Fairthorn's shoulder, and walking on slowly toward the house. "How often must I tell you that no marriage-bells can ring for me!"

"But you have told me, too, that you went to Twickenham to steal a sight of *her* again; and that it was the sight of her that made you resolve to wed no one else. And when I have railed against her for fickleness, have not you nearly frightened me out of my wits, as if no one might rail against her but yourself? And now she is free—and did you not grant that she would not refuse your hand, and would be true and faithful henceforth? And yet you insist on being—granite!"

"No, Dick, not granite; I wish I were!"

"Granite and pride," persisted Dick, courageously. "If one chips a bit off the one, one only breaks one's spade against the other."

"Pride!—you too!" muttered Darrell, mournfully; then aloud, "No, it is not pride now, whatever it might have been even yesterday. But I would rather be racked by all the tortures that pious inquisitors ever invented out of compassion for obstinate heretics, than condemn the woman I have so fatally loved to a penance the misery of which she can not foresee. She would accept me?—certainly! Why? Because she thinks she owes me reparation—because she pities me. And my heart tells me that I might become cruel, and mean, and vindictive, if I were to live day by day with one who created in me, while my life was at noon, a love never known in its morn, and to feel that that love's sole return was the pity vouchsafed to the nightfall of my age. No; if she pitied, but did not love me, when, eighteen years ago, we parted under yonder beech-tree, I should be a dotard to dream that woman's pity mellows into love as our locks become gray, and Youth turns our vows into ridicule. It is not pride that speaks here; it is rather humility, Dick! But we must not now talk of old age and by-gones. Youth and marriage-bells, Dick! Know that I have been for hours pondering how to reconcile with my old-fashioned notions dear Lionel's happiness. We must think of the living as well as the dead, Dick. I have solved the problem. I am happy, and so shall the young folks be."

"You don't mean to say that you will consent to—"

"Yes, to Lionel's marriage with that beautiful girl, whose parentage we never will ask. Great men are their own ancestors; why not sometimes fair women? Enough—I consent! I shall of course secure to my kinsman and his bride an ample fortune. Lionel will have time for his honeymoon before he departs for the wars. He will fight with good heart now, Dick. Young folks of the present day can not bear up against sorrow as they were trained to do in mine. And that amiable lady who has so much pity for me, has, of course, still more pity for a charming young couple for whose marriage she schemed, in order to give me a home, Dick. And rather than she should pine and fall ill, and—no matter; all shall be settled as it should be for the happiness of the living. But something else must be settled; we must think of the dead as well as the living; and this name of Darrell shall be buried with me in the grave beside my father's. Lionel Haughton will keep to his own name. Live the Haughtons! Perish, but with no blot on their shield—perish the Darrells! Why, what is that? Tears, Dick? Pooh!—be a man! And I want all your strength; for you, too, must have a share in the sacrifice. What follows is not the dictate of pride, if I *can* read myself aright. No; it is the final completion and surrender of the object on which so much of my life has been wasted—but a surrender that satisfies my crotchets of honor. At all events, if it be pride in disguise, it will demand no victim in others; you and I may have a sharp pang—we must bear it, Dick."

"What on earth is coming now?" said Dick, dolefully.

"The due to the dead, Richard Fairthorn. This nook of fair England, in which I learned from the dead to love honor—this poor domain of Fawley—shall go in bequest to the College at which I was reared."

"Sir!"

"It will serve for a fellowship or two to honest, brave-hearted young scholars. It will be thus, while English institutions may last, devoted to Learning and Honor. It may sustain for mankind some ambition more generous than mine, it appears, ever was—settled thus, not in mine, but my dear father's name, like the Darrell Museum. These are my dues to the dead, Dick! And the old house thus becomes useless. The new house was ever a folly. They must go down both, as soon as the young folks are married: not a stone stand on stone! The plowshare shall pass over their sites! And this task I order you to see done. I have not strength. You will then hasten to join me at Sorrento, that corner of earth on which Horace wished to breathe his last sigh.

'Ille te mecum locus et beatæ
Postulant arces—ibi—tu—'"

"Don't, Sir, don't. Horace again! It is too much." Fairthorn was choking; but as if the idea presented to him was really too monstrous for belief, he clutched at Darrell with so uncertain and vehement a hand that he almost caught him by the throat, and sobbed out, "You must be joking."

"Seriously and solemnly, Richard Fairthorn," said Darrell, gently disentangling the fingers that threatened him with strangulation. "Seriously and solemnly I have uttered to you my deliberate purpose. I implore you, in the name of our lifelong friendship, to face this pain as I do—resolutely, cheerfully. I implore you to execute to the letter the instructions I shall leave with you on quitting England, which I shall do the day Lionel is married; and then, dear old friend, calm days, clear consciences. In climes where whole races have passed away—proud cities themselves sunk in graves—where our petty grief for a squirearch's lost house we shall both grow ashamed to indulge—there we will moralize, rail against vain dreams and idle pride, cultivate vines and orange-trees, with Horace—nay, nay, Dick—with the FLUTE!"

CHAPTER V.

More bounteous run rivers when the ice that locked their flow melts into their waters. And when fine natures relent, their kindness is swelled by the thaw.

DARRELL escaped into the house; Fairthorn sunk upon the ground, and resigned himself for some minutes to unmanly lamentations. Suddenly he started up; a thought came into his brain—a hope into his breast. He made a caper—launched himself into a precipitate zigzag—gained the hall-door—plunged into his own mysterious hiding-place—and in less than an hour re-emerged, a letter in his hand, with which he had just time to catch the postman, as that functionary was striding off from the back-yard with the official bag.

This exploit performed, Fairthorn shambled into his chair at the dinner-table, as George Morley concluded the grace which preceded the meal that, in Fairthorn's estimation, usually made the grand event of the passing day. But the poor man's appetite was gone. As Sophy dined with Waife, the Morleys alone shared, with host and secretary, the melancholy entertainment. George was no less silent than Fairthorn; Darrell's manner perplexed him. Mrs. Morley, not admitted into her husband's confidence in secrets that concerned others, though in all his own he was to her conjugal sight *pellucidior vitro*, was the chief talker; and, being the best woman in the world, ever wishing to say something pleasant, she fell to praising the dear old family pictures that scowled at her from the wall, and informed Fairthorn that she had made great progress with her sketch of the old house as seen from the lake, and was in doubt whether she should introduce in the foreground some figures of the olden time, as in Nash's Views of Baronial Mansions. But not a word could she coax out of Fairthorn; and when she turned to appeal to Darrell, the host suddenly addressed to George a question as to the texts and authorities by which the Papal Church defends its doctrine of Purgatory. That entailed a long, and no doubt erudite, reply, which lasted not only through the rest of the dinner, but till Mrs. Morley, edified by the discourse, and delighted to notice the undeviating attention which Darrell paid to her distinguished spouse, took advantage of the first full stop, and retired. Fairthorn finished his bottle of port, and, far from convinced that there was no Purgatory, but inclined to advance the novel heresy that Purgatory sometimes commenced on this side the grave—slinked away, and was seen no more that night; neither was his flute heard.

Then Darrell rose, and said, "I shall go up stairs to our sick friend for a few minutes; may I find you here when I come back? Your visit to him can follow mine."

On entering Waife's room, Darrell went straight forward toward Sophy, and cut off her retreat.

"Fair guest," said he, with a grace and tenderness of manner which, when he pleased it, could be ineffably bewitching—"teach me some art by which in future rather to detain than to scare away the presence in which a duller age than mine could still recognize the charms that subdue the young." He led her back gently to the seat she had deserted—placed himself next to her—addressed a few cordial queries to Waife about his health and comforts—and then said, "You must not leave me for some days yet. I have written by this post to my kinsman, Lionel Haughton. I have refused to be his embassador at a court in which, by all the laws of nations, he is bound to submit himself to his conqueror. I can not even hope that he may escape with his freedom. No! chains for life! Thrice happy, indeed, if that be the merciful sentence you inflict."

He raised Sophy's hand to his lips as he ended, and before she could even quite comprehend the meaning of his words—so was she startled, confused, incredulous of such sudden change in fate—the door had closed on Darrell, and Waife had clasped her to his breast, murmuring, "Is not Providence kind?"

Darrell rejoined the scholar. "George," said he, "be kind enough to tell Alban that you showed me his letter. Be kind enough also to write to Lady Montfort, and say that I gratefully acknowledge her wish to repair to me those losses which have left me to face age and the grave alone. Tell her that her old friend (you remember, George, I knew her as a child) sees in that wish the same sweet goodness of heart which soothed him when his son died and his daughter fled. Add that her wish is gratified. To that marriage, in which she compassionately foresaw the best solace left to my bereaved and baffled existence—to that marriage I give my consent."

"You do! Oh, Mr. Darrell, how I honor you!"

"Nay, I no more deserve honor for consenting than I should have deserved contempt if I had continued to refuse. To do what I deemed right is not more my wish now than it was twelve hours ago. To what so sudden a change of resolve in one who changes resolves very rarely, may be due, whether to Lady Montfort, to Alban, or to that metaphysical skill with which you wound into my reason, and compelled me to review all its judgments, I do not attempt to determine; yet I thought I had no option but the course I had taken. No; it is fair to yourself to give you the chief credit; you made me desire, you made me resolve, to find an option—I have found one. And now pay your visit where mine has been just paid. It will be three days, I suppose, before Lionel, having joined his new regiment at * * * *, can be here. And then it will be weeks yet, I believe, before his regiment sails;—and I'm all for short courtships."

CHAPTER VI.

Fairthorn frightens Sophy. Sir Isaac is invited by Darrell, and forms one of a Family Circle.

SUCH a sweet voice in singing breaks out from yon leafless beeches! Waife hears it at noon from his window. Hark! Sophy has found song once more.

She is seated on a garden bench, looking across the lake toward the gloomy old Manor House and the tall spectre-palace beside it. Mrs. Morley is also on the bench, hard at work on her sketch; Fairthorn prowls through the thickets behind, wandering restless and wretched,

and wrathful beyond all words to describe. He hears that voice singing; he stops short, perfectly rabid with indignation. "Singing," he muttered, "singing in triumph, and glowering at the very House she dooms to destruction. Worse than Nero striking his lyre amidst the conflagration of Rome!"

By-and-by Sophy, who somehow or other can not sit long in any place, and tires that day of any companion, wanders away from the lake, and comes right upon Fairthorn. Hailing, in her unutterable secret bliss, the musician who had so often joined her rambles in the days of unuttered secret sadness, she sprang toward him with welcome and mirth in a face that would have lured Diogenes out of his tub. Fairthorn recoiled sidelong, growling forth, "Don't—you had better not!"—grinned the most savage grin, showing all his teeth like a wolf; and as she stood, mute with wonder, perhaps with fright, he slunk edgewise off, as if aware of his own murderous inclinations, turning his head more than once, and shaking it at her; then, with the wonted mystery which enveloped his exits, he was gone!—vanished behind a crag, or amidst a bush, or into a hole—Heaven knows; but like the lady in the Siege of Corinth, who warned the renegade Alp of his approaching end, he was "gone."

Twice again that day Sophy encountered the enraged musician; each time the same menacing aspect and weird disappearance.

"Is Mr. Fairthorn ever a little—odd?" asked Sophy, timidly, of George Morley.

"Always," answered George, dryly.

Sophy felt relieved at that reply. Whatever is habitual in a man's manner, however unpleasant, is seldom formidable. Still Sophy could not help saying,

"I wish poor Sir Isaac were here!"

"Do you?" said a soft voice behind her; "and, pray, who is Sir Isaac?"

The Speaker was Darrell, who had come forth with the resolute intent to see more of Sophy, and make himself as amiably social as he could. Guy Darrell could never be kind by halves.

"Sir Isaac is the wonderful dog you have heard me describe," replied George.

"Would he hurt my doe if he came here?" asked Darrell.

"Oh no," cried Sophy; "he never hurts any thing. He once found a wounded hare, and he brought it in his mouth to us so tenderly, and seemed so anxious that we should cure it, which grandfather did, and the hare would sometimes hurt him, but he never hurt the hare."

Said George, sonorously,

> "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

Darrell drew Sophy's arm into his own. "Will you walk back to the lake with me," said he, "and help me to feed the swans? George, send your servant express for Sir Isaac. I am impatient to make his acquaintance."

Sophy's hand involuntarily pressed Darrell's arm. She looked up into his face with innocent, joyous gratitude; feeling at once, and as by magic, that her awe of him was gone.

Darrell and Sophy rambled thus together for more than an hour. He sought to draw out her mind, unaware to herself; he succeeded. He was struck with a certain simple poetry of thought which pervaded her ideas—not artificial sentimentality, but a natural tendency to detect in all life a something of delicate or beautiful which lies hid from the ordinary sense. He found, thanks to Lady Montfort, that, though far from learned, she was more acquainted with literature than he had supposed. And sometimes he changed color, or breathed his short, quick sigh when he recognized her familiarity with passages in his favorite authors which he himself had commended, or read aloud, to the Caroline of old.

The next day Waife, who seemed now recovered as by enchantment, walked forth with George, Darrell again with Sophy. Sir Isaac arrived—immense joy; the doe butts Sir Isaac, who, retreating, stands on his hind legs, and, having possessed himself of Waife's crutch, presents fire; the doe in her turn retreats; half an hour afterward doe and dog are friends.

Waife is induced, without much persuasion, to join the rest of the party at dinner. In the evening all (Fairthorn excepted) draw round the fire. Waife is entreated by George to read a scene or two out of Shakspeare. He selects the latter portion of "King Lear." Darrell, who never was a play-goer, and who, to his shame be it said, had looked very little into Shakspeare since he left college, was wonder-struck. He himself read beautifully—all great orators, I suppose, do; but his talent was not mimetic—not imitative; he could never have been an actor—never thrown himself into existences wholly alien or repugnant to his own. Grave or gay, stern or kind, Guy Darrell, though often varying, was always Guy Darrell.

But when Waife was once in that magical world of art, Waife was gone—nothing left of him; the part lived as if there were no actor to it; it *was* the Fool—it was Lear.

For the first time Darrell felt what a grand creature a grand actor really is—what a luminous, unconscious critic bringing out beauties of which no commentator ever dreamed! When the reading was over talk still flowed; the gloomy old hearth knew the charm of a home-circle. All started incredulous when the clock struck one. Just as Sophy was passing to the door, out from behind the window-curtain glared a vindictive, spiteful eye. Fairthorn made a mow at her, which 'tis a pity Waife did not see—it would have been a study for Caliban. She uttered a little scream.

"What's the matter?" cried the host.

"Nothing," said she, quickly—far too generous to betray the hostile oddities of the musician. "Sir Isaac was in my way—that was all."

"Another evening we must have Fairthorn's flute," said Darrell. "What a pity he was not here to-night!—he would have enjoyed such reading—no one more."

Said Mrs. Morley, "He was here once or twice during the evening; but he vanished!"

"Vanishing seems his forte," said George.

Darrell looked annoyed. It was his peculiarity to resent any jest, however slight, against an absent friend; and at that moment his heart was perhaps more warmed toward Dick Fairthorn than to any man living. If he had not determined to be as amiable and mild toward his guests as his nature would permit, probably

George might have had the flip of a sarcasm which would have tingled for a month. But as it was, Darrell contented himself with saying, gravely,

"No, George; Fairthorn's foible is vanishing—his forte is fidelity. If my fortune were to vanish, Fairthorn would never disappear; and that's more than I would say if I were a King, and Fairthorn—a Bishop!"

After that extraordinary figure of speech "Good-nights" were somewhat hastily exchanged; and Fairthorn was left behind the curtain with feelings toward all his master's guests as little, it is to be hoped, like those of a Christian Bishop toward his fellow-creatures as they possibly could be.

CHAPTER VII.

"Domus et placens Uxor."

Fairthorn finds nothing *placens* in the *Uxor*, to whom *Domus* is indebted for its destruction.

Another day! Lionel is expected to arrive an hour or two after noon. Darrell is in his room—his will once more before him. He has drawn up a rough copy of the codicil by which Fawley is to pass away; and the name of Darrell be consigned to the care of grateful Learning, linked with prizes and fellowships—a public property—lost forever to private representatives of its sepulchred bearers. Preparations for departure from the doomed dwelling-house have begun. There are large boxes on the floor; and favorite volumes—chiefly in science or classics—lie piled beside them for selection.

What is really at the bottom of Guy Darrell's heart? Does he feel reconciled to his decision? Is the virtue of his new self-sacrifice in itself a consoling reward? Is that cordial urbanity, that cheerful kindness, by which he has been yet more endearing himself to his guests, sincere or assumed? As he throws aside his pen, and leans his cheek on his hand, the expression of his countenance may perhaps best answer those questions. It has more unmingled melancholy than was habitual to it before, even when in his gloomiest moods; but it is a melancholy much more soft and subdued; it is the melancholy of resignation—that of a man who has ceased a long struggle—paid his offering to the appeased Nemesis, in casting into the sea the thing that had been to him the dearest.

But in resignation, when complete, there is always a strange relief. Despite that melancholy, Darrell is less unhappy than he has been for years. He feels as if a suspense had passed—a load been lifted from his breast. After all, he has secured, to the best of his judgment, the happiness of the living, and in relinquishing the object to which his own life has been vainly devoted, and immolating the pride attached to it, he has yet, to use his own words, paid his "dues to the dead." No descendant from a Jasper Losely and a Gabrielle Desmarets will sit as mistress of the house in which Loyalty and Honor had garnered, with the wrecks of fortune, the memories of knightly fame—nor perpetuate the name of Darrell through children whose blood has a source in the sink of infamy and fraud. Nor was this consolation that of a culpable pride; it was bought by the abdication of a pride that had opposed its prejudices to living worth—to living happiness. Sophy would not be punished for sins not her own—Lionel not barred from a prize that earth never might replace. What mattered to them a mouldering, old, desolate Manor House—a few hundreds of pitiful acres? Their children would not be less blooming if their holiday summer noons were not shaded by those darksome trees—nor less lively of wit, if their school themes were signed in the name, not of Darrell, but Haughton.

A slight nervous knock at the door. Darrell has summoned Fairthorn; Fairthorn enters. Darrell takes up a paper; it contains minute instructions as to the demolition of the two buildings. The materials of the new pile may be disposed of, sold, carted away—any how, any where. Those of the old house are sacred—not a brick to be carried from the precincts around it. No; from foundation to roof, all to be piously removed—to receive formal interment deep in the still bosom of the little lake, and the lake to be filled up and turfed over. The pictures and antiquities selected for the Darrell Museum are, of course, to be carefully transported to London—warehoused safely till the gift from owner to nation be legally ratified. The pictures and articles of less value will be sent to an auction. But when it came to the old family portraits in the Manor House, the old homely furniture, familiarized to sight and use and love from infancy, Darrell was at a loss; his invention failed. That question was reserved for farther consideration.

"And why," says Fairthorn, bluntly and coarsely, urging at least reprieve, "why, if it must be, not wait till you are no more? Why must the old house be buried before you are?"

"Because," answered Darrell, "such an order, left by will, would seem a reproach to my heirs; it would wound Lionel to the quick. Done in my lifetime, and just after I have given my blessing on his marriage, I can suggest a thousand reasons for an old man's whim; and my manner alone will dispel all idea of a covert affront to his charming innocent bride."

"I wish she were hanged, with all my heart," muttered Fairthorn, "coming here to do such astonishing mischief! But, Sir, I can't obey you; 'tis no use talking. You must get some one else. Parson Morley will do it—with pleasure, too, no doubt; or that hobbling old man whom I suspect to be a conjuror. Who knows but what he may get knocked on the head as he is looking on with his wicked one eye; and then there will be an end of him, too, which would be a great satisfaction!"

"Pshaw, my dear Dick; there is no one else I can ask but you. The Parson would argue; I've had enough of his arguings; and the old man is the last whom my own arguings could deceive. *Fiat justitia.*"

"Don't, Sir, don't; you are breaking my heart!—'tis a shame, Sir," sobbed the poor faithful rebel.

"Well, Dick, then I must see it done myself; and you shall go on first to Sorrento, and hire some villa to suit us. I don't see why Lionel should not be married next week; then the house will be clear. And—yes—it *was* cowardly in me to shrink. Mine be the task.

Shame on me to yield it to another. Go back to thy flute, Dick.

"'Neque libias
Euterpe cohibet, nec Polyhymnia
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton!'"

At that last remorseless shaft from the Horatian quiver, "Venenatis gravida sagittis," Fairthorn could stand ground no longer; there was a shamble—a plunge—and once more the man was vanished.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Flute-player shows how little Music hath power to soothe the savage breast—of a Musician.

Fairthorn found himself on the very spot in which, more than five years ago, Lionel, stung by Fairthorn's own incontinent prickles, had been discovered by Darrell. There he threw himself on the ground, as the boy had done; there, like the boy, he brooded moodily, bitterly—sore with the world and himself. To that letter, written on the day that Darrell had so shocked him, and on which letter he had counted as a last forlorn-hope, no answer had been given. In an hour or so Lionel would arrive; those hateful nuptials, dooming Fawley as the nuptials of Paris and Helen had doomed Troy, would be finally arranged. In another week the work of demolition would commence. He never meant to leave Darrell to superintend that work. No; grumble and refuse as he might till the last moment, he knew well enough that, when it came to the point, he, Richard Fairthorn, must endure any torture that could save Guy Darrell from a pang. A voice comes singing low through the grove—the patter of feet on the crisp leaves. He looks up; Sir Isaac is scrutinizing him gravely—behind Sir Isaac, Darrell's own doe, led patiently by Sophy—yes, lending its faithless neck to that female criminal's destroying hand. He could not bear that sight, which added insult to injury. He scrambled up—darted a kick at Sir Isaac—snatched the doe from the girl's hand, and looked her in the face (*her*—not Sophy, but the doe) with a reproach that, if the brute had not been lost to all sense of shame, would have cut her to the heart; then, turning to Sophy, he said, "No, Miss! I reared this creature—fed it with my own hands, Miss. I gave it up to Guy Darrell, Miss; and you sha'n't steal this from him whatever else you may do, Miss."

Sophy. "Indeed, Mr. Fairthorn, it was for Mr. Darrell's sake that I wished to make friends with the doe—as you would with poor Sir Isaac, if you would but try and like me—a little, only a very little, Mr. Fairthorn."

Fairthorn. "Don't!"

Sophy. "Don't what? I am so sorry to see I have annoyed you somehow. You have not been the same person to me the last two or three days. Tell me what I have done wrong; scold me, but make it up."

Fairthorn. "Don't hold out your hand to me! Don't be smiling in my face! I don't choose it! Get out of my sight! You are standing between me and the old house—robbing me even of my last looks at the home which you—"

Sophy. "Which I—what?"

Fairthorn. "Don't, I say, don't—don't tempt me. You had better not ask questions—that's all. I shall tell you the truth; I know I shall; my tongue is itching to tell it. Please to walk on."

Despite the grotesque manner and astounding rudeness of the flute-player, his distress of mind was so evident—there was something so genuine and earnest at the bottom of his ludicrous anger—that Sophy began to feel a vague presentiment of evil. That she was the mysterious cause of some great suffering to this strange enemy, whom she had unconsciously provoked, was clear; and she said, therefore, with more gravity than she had before evinced,

"Mr. Fairthorn, tell me how I have incurred your displeasure. I entreat you to do so; no matter how painful the truth may be, it is due to us both not to conceal it."

A ray of hope darted through Fairthorn's enraged and bewildered mind. He looked to the right—he looked to the left; no one near. Releasing his hold on the doe, he made a sidelong dart toward Sophy, and said, "Hush! do you really care what becomes of Mr. Darrell?"

"To be sure I do."

"You would not wish him to die broken-hearted in a foreign land—that old house leveled to the ground, and buried in the lake? Eh, Miss—eh?"

"How can you ask me such questions?" said Sophy, faintly. "Do speak plainly, and at once."

"Well, I will, Miss. I believe you are a good young lady, after all—and don't wish really to bring disgrace upon all who want to keep you in the dark, and—"

"Disgrace!" interrupted Sophy; and her pure spirit rose, and the soft blue eye flashed a ray like a shooting-star.

"No, I am sure you would not like it; and some time or other you could not help knowing, and you would be very sorry for it. And that boy, Lionel, who was as proud as Guy Darrell himself when I saw him last (prouder, indeed) —that *he* should be so ungrateful to his benefactor! And, indeed, the day may come when he may turn round on you, or on the lame old gentleman, and say he has been disgraced. Should not wonder at all! Young folks, when they are sweet-hearting, only talk about roses, and angels, and such like; but when husbands and wives fall out, as they always do sooner or later, they don't mince their words then, and they just take the sharpest thing that they can find at their tongue's end. So you may depend on it, my dear Miss, that some day or other that young Haughton will say 'that you lost him the old Manor House and the old Darrell name,' and have been his disgrace; that's the very word, Miss; I've heard husbands and wives say it to each other over and over again."

Sophy. "Oh, Mr. Fairthorn, Mr. Fairthorn! these horrid words can not be meant for me. I will go to Mr. Darrell—I will ask him how I can be a dis—" Her lips could not force out the word.

Fairthorn. "Ay; go to Mr. Darrell, if you please. He will deny it all; he will never speak to me again. I don't care—I am reckless. But it is not the less true that you make him an exile because you may make me a beggar."

Sophy (*wringing her hands*). "Have you no mercy, Mr. Fairthorn? Will you not explain?"

Fairthorn. "Yes, if you will promise to keep it secret at least for the next six months—any thing for breathing time."

Sophy (*impatiently*). "I promise, I promise! speak, speak!"

And then Fairthorn did speak! He did speak of Jasper Losely—his character—his debasement—even of his midnight visit to her host's chamber. He did speak of the child fraudulently sought to be thrust on Darrell—of Darrell's just indignation and loathing. The man was merciless, though he had not an idea of the anguish he was inflicting, he was venting his own anguish. All the mystery of her past life became clear at once to the unhappy girl—all that had been kept from her by protecting love. All her vague conjectures now became a dreadful certainty;—explained now why Lionel had fled her—why he had written that letter, over the contents of which she had pondered, with her finger on her lip, as if to hush her own sighs—all, all! She marry Lionel now! impossible! She bring disgrace upon him, in return for such generous, magnanimous affection! She drive his benefactor, her grandsire's vindicator, from his own hearth! She—she—that Sophy who, as a mere infant, had recoiled from the thought of playful subterfuge and tamperings with plain honest truth! She rose before Fairthorn had done; indeed the tormentor, left to himself, would not have ceased till nightfall.

"Fear not, Mr. Fairthorn," she said, resolutely, "Mr. Darrell will be no exile; his house will not be destroyed. Lionel Haughton shall not wed the child of disgrace! Fear not, Sir; all is safe!"

She shed not a tear; nor was there writ on her countenance that CHANGE, speaking of blighted hope, which had passed over it at her young lover's melancholy farewell. No, now she was supported—now there was a virtue by the side of a sorrow—now love was to shelter and save the beloved from disgrace—from disgrace! At that thought disgrace fell harmless from herself as the rain from the plumes of a bird. She passed on, her cheek glowing, her form erect.

By the porch door she met Waife and the Morleys. With a kind of wild impetuosity she seized the old man's arm, and drew it fondly, clingingly within her own. Henceforth they two were to be, as in years gone by, all in all to each other. George Morley eyed her countenance in thoughtful surprise. Mrs. Morley, bent as usual on saying something seasonably kind, burst into a eulogium on her brilliant color. So they passed on toward the garden side of the house. Wheels—the tramp of hoofs, full gallop; and George Morley, looking up, exclaimed, "Ha! here comes Lionel!—and see, Darrell is hastening out to welcome him!"

CHAPTER IX.

The letter on which Richard Fairthorn relied for the defeat of the conspiracy against Fawley Manor House. Bad aspects for Houses. The House of Vipont is threatened. A Physician attempts to medicine to a mind diseased. A strange communication, which hurries the reader on to the next Chapter.

It has been said that Fairthorn had committed to a certain letter his last desperate hope that something might yet save Fawley from demolition, and himself and his master from an exile's home in that smiling nook of earth to which Horace invited Septimius, as uniting the advantages of a mild climate, excellent mutton, capital wine; and affording to Septimius the prospective privilege of sprinkling a tear over the cinder of his poetical friend while the cinder was yet warm; inducements which had no charm at all to Fairthorn, who was quite satisfied with the Fawley Southdowns—held in just horror all wishy-washy light wines—and had no desire to see Darrell reduced to a cinder for the pleasure of sprinkling that cinder with a tear.

The letter in question was addressed to Lady Montfort. Unscrupulously violating the sacred confidence of his master, the treacherous wretch, after accusing her in language little more consistent with the respect due to the fair sex than that which he had addressed to Sophy, of all the desolation that the perfidious nuptials of Caroline Lyndsay had brought upon Guy Darrell, declared that the least Lady Montfort could do to repair the wrongs inflicted by Caroline Lyndsay, was—not to pity his master!—that her pity was killing him. He repeated, with some grotesque comments of his own, but on the whole not inaccurately, what Darrell had said to him on the subject of her pity. He then informed her of Darrell's consent to Lionel's marriage with Sophy; in which criminal espousals it was clear, from Darrell's words, that Lady Montfort had had some nefarious share. In the most lugubrious colors he brought before her the consequences of that marriage — the extinguished name, the demolished dwelling-place, the renunciation of native soil itself. He called upon her, by all that was sacred, to contrive some means to undo the terrible mischief she had originally occasioned, and had recently helped to complete. His epistle ended by an attempt to conciliate and coax. He revived the image of that wild Caroline Lyndsay to whom HE had never refused a favor; whose earliest sums he had assisted to cast up—to whose young idea he had communicated the elementary principles of the musical gamut—to whom he had played on his flute, winter eve and summer noon, by the hour together; that Caroline Lyndsay who, when a mere child, had led Guy Darrell where she willed, as by a thread of silk. Ah, how Fairthorn had leaped for joy when, eighteen years ago, he had thought that Caroline Lyndsay was to be the sunshine and delight of the house to which she had lived to bring the cloud and the grief! And by all these memories, Fairthorn conjured her either to break off the marriage she had evidently helped to bring about, or, failing that, to convince Guy Darrell that he was not the object of her remorseful and affectionate compassion!

Caroline was almost beside herself at the receipt of this letter. The picture of Guy Darrell effacing his very life from his native land, and destroying the last memorials of his birthright and his home—the conviction of the influence she still retained over his bleak and solitary existence—the experience she had already acquired that the influence failed where she had so fondly hoped it might begin to repair and to bless,

all overpowered her with emotions of yearning tenderness and unmitigated despair. What could she do? She could not offer herself, again to be rejected. She could not write again, to force her penitence upon the man who, while acknowledging his love to be unconquered, had so resolutely refused to see, in the woman who had once deceived his trust—the Caroline of old! Alas! if he were but under the delusion that her pity was the substitute, and not the companion of love, how could she undeceive him? How say—how write—"Accept me, for I love you." Caroline Montfort had no pride of rank, but she had pride of sex; that pride had been called forth, encouraged, strengthened, throughout all the years of her wedded life. For Guy Darrell's sake, and to him alone, that pride she had cast away—trampled upon; such humility was due to him. But when the humility had been once in vain, could it be repeated—would it not be debasement? In the first experiment she had but to bow to his reproach—in a second experiment she might have but to endure his contempt. Yet how, with her sweet, earnest, affectionate nature — how she longed for one more interview — one more explanation! If chance could but bring it about; if she had but a pretext—a fair reason apart from any interest of her own, to be in his presence once more! But in a few days he would have left England forever—his heart yet more hardened in its resolves by the last sacrifice to what it had so sternly recognized to be a due to others. Never to see him more—never! to know how much in that sacrifice he was suffering now—would perhaps suffer more hereafter, in the reaction that follows all strain upon purpose—and yet not a word of comfort from her—her who felt born to be his comforter!

But this marriage, that cost him so much, must that be? Could she dare, even for his sake, to stand between two such fair young lives as those of Lionel and Sophy—confide to them what Fairthorn had declared—appeal to their generosity? She shrunk from inflicting such intolerable sorrow. Could it be her duty? In her inability to solve this last problem, she bethought herself of Alban Morley; here, at least, he might give advice—offer suggestion. She sent to his house entreating him to call. Her messenger was some hours before he found the Colonel, and then brought back but a few hasty lines—"Impossible to call that day. The Crisis had come at last! The Country, the House of Vipont, the British Empire, were trembling in the balance. The Colonel was engaged every moment for the next twelve hours. He had the present Earl of Montfort, who was intractable and stupid beyond conception, to see and talk over; Carr Vipont was hard at work on the materials for the new Cabinet—Alban was helping Carr Vipont. If the House of Vipont failed England at this moment, it would not be a Crisis, but a CRASH! The Colonel hoped to arrange an interview with Lady Montfort for a minute or two the next day. But perhaps she would excuse him from a journey to Twickenham, and drive into town to see him; if not at home, he would leave word where he was to be found."

By the beard of Jupiter Capitolinus, there are often revolutions in the heart of a woman, during which she is callous to a Crisis, and has not even a fear for a CRASH!

The next day came George's letter to Caroline, with the gentle message from Darrell; and when Dr. F——, whose apprehensions for the state of her health Colonel Morley had by no means exaggerated, called in the afternoon to see the effect of his last prescription, he found her in such utter prostration of nerves and spirits, that he resolved to hazard a dose not much known to great ladies, viz., three grains of plain-speaking, with a minim of frightening.

"My dear lady," said he, "yours is a case in which physicians can be of very little use. There is something on the mind which my prescriptions fail to reach; worry of some sort—decidedly worry. And unless you yourself can either cure that, or will make head against it, worry, my dear Lady Montfort, will end, not in consumption—you are too finely formed to let worry eat holes in the lungs—no; but in a confirmed aneurism of the heart, and the first sudden shock might then be immediately fatal. The heart is a noble organ—bears a great deal—but still its endurance has limits. Heart complaints are more common than they were;—over-education and over-civilization, I suspect. Very young people are not so subject to them; they have flurry, not worry—a very different thing. A good chronic silent grief of some years' standing, that gets worried into acute inflammation at the age when feeling is no longer fancy, throws out a heart-disease which sometimes kills without warning, or sometimes, if the grief be removed, will rather prolong than shorten life, by inducing a prudent avoidance of worry in future. There is that worthy old gentleman who was taken so ill at Fawley, and about whom you were so anxious; in his case there had certainly been chronic grief; then came acute worry, and the heart could not get through its duties. Fifty years ago doctors would have cried 'apoplexy!'—nowadays we know that the heart saves the head. Well, he was more easy in his mind the last time I saw him, and, thanks to his temperance, and his constitutional dislike to self-indulgence in worry, he may jog on to eighty, in spite of the stenoscope! Excess in the moral emotions gives heart-disease; abuse of the physical powers, paralysis;—both more common than they were—the first for your gentle sex, the second for our rough one. Both, too, lie in wait for their victims at the entrance into middle life. I have a very fine case of paralysis now; a man built up by nature to live to a hundred—never saw such a splendid formation — such bone and such muscle. I would have given Van Amburgh the two best of his lions, and my man would have done for all three in five minutes. All the worse for him, my dear lady—all the worse for him. His strength leads him on to abuse the main fountains of life, and out jumps avenging Paralysis and fells him to earth with a blow. 'Tis your Hercules that Paralysis loves; she despises the weak invalid, who prudently shuns all excess. And so, my dear lady, that assassin called Aneurism lies in wait for the hearts that abuse their own force of emotion; sparing hearts that, less vital, are thrifty in waste and supply. But you are not listening to me! And yet my patient may not be quite unknown to your ladyship; for in hap-

pening to mention, the other day, to the lady who attends to and nurses him, that I could not call this morning, as I had a visit to pay to Lady Montfort at Twickenham, she became very anxious about you and wrote this note which she begged me to give you. She seems very much attached to my patient—not his wife nor his sister. She interests me;—capital nurse—cleverish woman too. Oh! here is the note."

Caroline, who had given but little heed to this recital, listlessly received the note—scarcely looked at the address—and was about to put it aside, when the good doctor, who was intent upon rousing her by any means, said, "No, my dear lady, I promised that I would see you read the note; besides, I am the most curious of men, and dying to know a little more who and what is the writer."

Caroline broke the seal and read as follows:

"If Lady Montfort remembers Arabella Fossett, and will call at Clare Cottage, Vale of Health, Hampstead, at her ladyship's earliest leisure, and ask for Mrs. Crane, some information, not perhaps important to Lady Montfort, but very important to Mr. Darrell, will be given."

Lady Montfort startled the doctor by the alertness with which she sprang to her feet and rang the bell.

"What is it?" asked he.

"The carriage immediately," cried Lady Montfort as the servant entered.

Ah! you are going to see the poor lady, Mrs. Crane, eh? Well, it is a charming drive, and just what I should have recommended. Any exertion will do you good. Allow me;—why your pulse is already fifty per cent. better. Pray, what relation is Mrs. Crane to my patient?"

"I really don't know; pray excuse me, my dear Dr. F——."

"Certainly; go while the day is fine. Wrap up;—a close carriage, mind;—and I will look in to-morrow."

CHAPTER X.

Wherein is insinuated the highest compliment to Woman ever paid to her sex by the Author of this work.

Lady Montfort has arrived at Clare Cottage. She is shown by Bridget Greggs into a small room upon the first floor; folding-doors to some other room, closely shut—evidences of sickness in the house;—phials on the chimney-piece—a tray with a broth basin on the table—a saucepan on the hob—the sofa one of those that serve as a bed which sleep little visits for one who may watch through the night over some helpless sufferer—a woman's shawl thrown carelessly over its hard narrow bolster;—all, in short, betraying that pathetic untidiness and discomfort which says that a despot is in the house to whose will order and form are subordinate;—the imperious Tyranny of Disease establishing itself in a life that, within those four walls, has a value not to be measured by its worth to the world beyond. The more feeble and helpless the sufferer, the more sovereign the despotism—the more submissive the servitude.

In a minute or two one of the folding-doors silently opened, and as silently closed, admitting into Lady Montfort's presence a grim woman in iron gray.

Caroline could not, at the first glance, recognize that Arabella Fossett of whose handsome, if somewhat too strongly defined and sombre countenance, she had retained a faithful reminiscence. But Arabella had still the same imposing manner which had often repressed the gay spirits of her young pupil; and as she now motioned the great lady to a seat, and placed herself beside, an awed recollection of the schoolroom bowed Caroline's lovely head in mute respect.

Mrs. Crane. "You too are changed since I saw you last—that was more than five years ago, but you are not less beautiful. *You* can still be loved; *you* would not scare away the man whom you might desire to save. Sorrow has its partialities. Do you know that I have a cause to be grateful to you, without any merit of your own. In a very dark moment of my life—only vindictive and evil passions crowding on me—your face came across my sight. Goodness seemed there so beautiful—and, in this face, Evil looked so haggard! Do not interrupt me. I have but few minutes to spare you. Yes; at the sight of that face, gentle recollections rose up. You had ever been kind to me; and truthful, Caroline Lyndsay—truthful. Other thoughts came at the beam of that face, as other thoughts come when a strain of unexpected music reminds us of former days. I can not tell how, but from that moment a something more like womanhood than I had known for years entered into my heart. Within that same hour I was sorely tried—galled to the quick of my soul. Had I not seen you before, I might have dreamed of nothing but a stern and dire revenge. And a purpose of revenge I *did* form. But it was not to destroy—it was to save! I resolved that the man who laughed to scorn the idea of vows due to me—vows to bind life to life—should yet sooner or later be as firmly mine as if he had kept his troth; that my troth at least should be kept to him, as if it had been uttered at the altar. Hush, did you hear a moan?—No! He lies yonder, Caroline Lyndsay—mine, indeed, till the grave us do part. These hands have closed over him, and he rests in their clasp, helpless as an infant." Involuntarily Caroline recoiled. But looking into that care-worn face, there was in it so wild a mixture of melancholy tenderness, with a resolved and fierce expression of triumph, that, more impressed by the tenderness than by the triumph, the woman sympathized with the woman; and Caroline again drew near, nearer than before, and in her deep soft eyes pity alone was seen. Into those eyes Arabella looked as if spell-bound, and the darker and sterner expression in her own face gradually relaxed and fled, and only the melancholy tenderness was left behind. She resumed:

"I said to Guy Darrell that I would learn, if possible, whether the poor child whom I ill-used in my most wicked days, and whom you, it seems, have so benignly sheltered, was the daughter of Matilda—or, as he believed, of a yet more hateful mother. Long ago I had conceived a suspicion that there was some ground to doubt poor Jasper's assertion, for I had chanced to see two letters addressed to him—one from that Gabrielle Desmarets, whose influence over his life had been so baleful—in which she spoke of some guilty plunder with which she was coming to

London, and invited him again to join his fortunes with her own. Oh, but the cold, bloodless villainy of the tone!—the ease with which crimes for a gibbet were treated as topics for wit!" Arabella stopped — the same shudder came over her as when she had concluded the epistles abstracted from the dainty pocket-book. "But in the letter were also allusions to Sophy, to another attempt on Darrell to be made by Gabrielle herself. Nothing very clear; but a doubt did suggest itself—'Is she writing to him about his own child?' The other letter was from the French nurse with whom Sophy had been placed as an infant. It related to inquiries in person, and a visit to her own house, which Mr. Darrell had recently made; that letter also seemed to imply some deception, though but by a few dubious words. At that time the chief effect of the suspicion these letters caused was but to make me more bent on repairing to Sophy my cruelties to her childhood.* What if I had been cruel to an infant who, after all, was not the daughter of that false, false Matilda Darrell! I kept in my memory the French nurse's address. I thought that when in France I might seek and question her. But I lived only for one absorbing end. Sophy was not then in danger; and even my suspicions as to her birth died away. Pass on: — Guy Darrell! Ah, Lady Montfort! his life has been imbittered like mine; but he was man, and could bear it better. He has known, himself, the misery of broken faith, of betrayed affection, which he could pity so little when its blight fell on me; but you have excuse for desertion — you yourself were deceived; and I pardon him, for he pardoned Jasper, and we are fellow-sufferers. You weep! Pardon my rudeness. I did not mean to pain you. Try and listen calmly—I must hurry on. On leaving Mr. Darrell I crossed to France. I saw the nurse; I have ascertained the truth; here are the proofs in this packet. I came back —I saw Jasper Losely. He was on the eve of seeking you, whom he had already so wronged —of claiming the child, or rather of extorting money for the renunciation of a claim to one whom you had adopted. I told him how vainly he had hitherto sought to fly from me. One by one I recited the guilty schemes in which I had baffled his purpose—all the dangers from which I had rescued his life. I commanded him to forbear the project he had then commenced. I told him I would frustrate that project as I had frustrated others. Alas, alas! why is this tongue so harsh?—why does this face so belie the idea of human kindness? I did but enrage and madden him; he felt but the reckless impulse to destroy the life that then stood between himself and the objects to which he had pledged his own self-destruction. I thought I should die by his hand. I did not quail. Ah! the ghastly change that came over his face—the one glance of amaze and superstitious horror; his arm obeyed him not; his strength, his limbs forsook him; he fell at my feet—one side of him stricken dead! Hist! that is his voice—pardon me;" and Arabella flitted from the room, leaving the door ajar.

A feeble Voice, like the treble of an infirm old man, came painfully to Caroline's ear.

"I want to turn; help me. Why am I left alone? It is cruel to leave me so—cruel!"

In the softest tones to which that harsh voice *could* be tuned, the grim woman apologized and soothed.

"You gave me leave, Jasper dear. You said it would be a relief to you to have her pardon as well as theirs."

"Whose pardon?" asked the Voice, querulously.

"Caroline Lyndsay's—Lady Montfort's."

"Nonsense! What did I ever do against her? Oh—ah! I remember now. Don't let me have it over again. Yes—she pardons me, I suppose! Get me my broth, and don't be long!"

Arabella came back, closing the door; and while she busied herself with that precious saucepan on the hob—to which the Marchioness of Montfort had become a very secondary object—she said, looking toward Caroline from under her iron-gray ringlets—

"You heard—*he misses me!* He can't bear me out of his sight now—me, me! You heard!"

Meekly Lady Montfort advanced, bringing in her hand the tray with the broth basin.

"Yes, I heard! I must not keep you; but let me help while I stay."

So the broth was poured forth and prepared, and with it Arabella disappeared. She returned in a few minutes, beckoned to Caroline, and said, in a low voice—

"Come in—say you forgive him! Oh, you need not fear him; a babe could not fear him now!"

Caroline followed Arabella into the sick-room. No untidiness there; all so carefully, thoughtfully arranged. A pleasant room, too—with windows looking full on the sunniest side of the Vale of Health; the hearth so cheerily clear, swept so clean—the very ashes out of sight; flowers—costly exotics—on the table, on the mantle-piece; the couch drawn toward the window; and on that couch, in the gay rich dressing-gown of former days, warm coverlets heaped on the feet, snow-white pillows propping the head, lay what at first seemed a vague, undistinguishable mass—lay, what, as the step advanced, and the eye became more accurately searching, grew into Jasper Losely.

Yes! there, too weak indeed for a babe to fear, lay all that was left of the Strong Man! No enemy but himself had brought him thus low—spendthrift, and swindler, and robber of his own priceless treasures—Health and Strength —those grand rent-rolls of joy which Nature had made his inheritance. As a tree that is crumbling to dust under the gnarls of its bark, seems, the moment ere it falls, proof against time and the tempest;—so, within all decayed, stood that image of strength—so, air scarcely stirring, it fell. "And the pitcher was broken at the fountain; and the wheel was broken at the cistern. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher."

Jasper turned his dull eye toward Caroline, as she came softly to his side, and looked at her with a piteous gaze. The stroke that had shattered the form had spared the face; and illness and compulsory abstinence from habitual stimulants had taken from the aspect much of the coarseness—whether of shape or color—that of late years had disfigured its outline—and sup-

plied the delicacy that ends with youth by the delicacy that comes with the approach of death. So that, in no small degree, the beauty which had been to him so fatal a gift, was once more visible—the features growing again distinct, as wanness succeeded to the hues of intemperance, and emaciation to the bloated cheeks and swollen muscle. The goddess whose boons adorn the outward shell of the human spirit, came back to her favorite's death-couch as she had come to the cradle—not now as the Venus Erycina, goddess of Smile and Jest, but as the warning Venus Libitina, the goddess of Doom and the Funeral.

"I'm a very poor creature," said Jasper, after a pause. "I can't rise—I can't move without help. Very strange!—supernatural! She always said that if I raised my hand against her, it would fall palsied!" He turned his eye toward Arabella with a glare of angry terror. "She is a witch!" he said, and buried his face in the pillow. Tears rolled down the grim woman's cheek.

Lady Montfort. "She is rather your good ministering spirit. Do not be unkind to her. Over her you have more power now than you had when you were well and strong. She lives but to serve you; command her gently."

Jasper was not proof against that sweet voice. With difficulty he wrenched himself round, and again looked long at Caroline Montfort, as if the sight did him good; then he made a sign to Arabella, who flew to his side and raised him.

"I have been a sad dog," he said, with a mournful attempt at the old rollicking tone—"a very sad dog—in short, a villain! But all ladies are indulgent to villains—in fact, prefer them. Never knew a lady who could endure 'a good young man'—never! So I am sure you will forgive me, miss—ma'am. Who is this lady? when it comes to forgiveness, there are so many of them! Oh, I remember now—your ladyship will forgive me—'tis all down in black and white what I've done—Bella has it. You see *this* hand—I can write with this hand—this is not paralyzed. This is not the hand I tried to raise against her. But, *basta*, *basta!* where was I? My poor head!—I know what it is to have a head now!—ache, ache!—boom, boom—weight, weight—heavy as a church bell—hollow as a church bell—noisy as a church bell! Brandy! give me brandy, you witch!—I mean Bella, good Bella, give me brandy!"

"Not yet, Jasper dear. You are to have it every third hour; it is not time yet, dearest; you must attend to the doctor, and try to get well and recover your strength. You remember I told you how kind Lady Montfort had been to your father, and you wished to see and thank her."

"My father—my poor, poor father! You've been kind to him! Bless you, bless you! And you will see him? I want his pardon before I die. Don't forget, and—and—"

"Poor Sophy!" said Mrs. Crane.

"Ah yes! But she's well off now, you tell me. I can't think I have injured her. And really girls and women are intended to be a little useful to one. *Basta*, *Basta!*"

"Mr. Darrell—"

"Yes, yes, yes! I forgive him, or he forgives me; settle it as you like. But my father's pardon, Lady Montfort, you will get me *that!*"

"I will, I will."

He looked at her again, and smiled. Arabella gently let his head fall back upon the pillow.

"Throw a handkerchief over my face," he said, feebly, "and leave me; but be in call; I feel sleepy." His eyes closed; he seemed asleep even before they stole from the room.

"You will bring his father to him?" said Arabella, when she and Lady Montfort were again alone. "In this packet is Jasper's confession of the robbery for which that poor old man suffered. I never knew of that before. But you see how mild he is now!—how his heart is changed; it is indeed changed more than he shows; only you have seen him at the worst—his mind wanders a little to-day; it does sometimes. I have a favor to ask of you. I once heard a preacher, not many months ago; he affected me as no preacher ever did before. I was told that he was Colonel Morley's nephew. Will you ask Colonel Morley to persuade him to come to Jasper?"

"My cousin, George Morley! He shall come, I promise you; so shall your poor patient's forgiving father. Is there more I can do?"

"No. Explain to Mr. Darrell the reason why I have so long delayed sending to him the communication which he will find in the packet I have given to you, and which you will first open, reading the contents yourself—a part of them, at least, in Jasper's attestation of his stratagem to break off your marriage with Mr. Darrell, may yet be of some value to you—you had better also show the papers to Colonel Morley—he may complete the task—I had meant, on returning to England, or before seeing Mr. Darrell, to make the inquiries which you will see are still necessary. But then came this terrible affliction! I have been able to think of nothing else but Jasper—terrible to quit the house which contains him for an hour—only when Dr. F. told me that he was attending you, that you were ill and suffering, I resolved to add to this packet Jasper's own confession. Ah, and he gave it so readily, and went yesterday through the fatigue of writing with such good heart. I tell you that there is a change within him; there *is*—there *is!* Well, well—I resolved to give you the packet to transmit to Mr. Darrell; for somehow or other I connected your illness with your visit to him at Fawley!"

"My visit to Mr. Darrell!"

"Jasper saw you as your carriage drove from the park gate, not very many days since. Ah, you change color! You have wronged that man; repair the wrong; you have the power!"

"Alas! no," murmured Caroline, "I have not the power."

"Pooh—he loves you still. *You* are not one of those whom men forget."

Caroline was silent, but involuntarily she lowered her vail. In an instant the acute sense of the grim woman detected the truth.

"Ah! Pride—pride in both," she said. "I understand—I dare not blame *him* here. But you—you were the injurer; you have no right to pride; you will see him again!"

"No—never—never!" faltered Caroline, with accents scarcely audible under her vail.

Arabella was silent for a moment, and Lady Montfort rose hastily to depart.

"You will see him again, I tell you;" and Arabella then, following her to the door—

"Stay; do you think HE will die?"

"Good Heavens! Mr. Darrell?"

"No, no—Jasper Losely!"

"I hope not. What does Dr. F. say?"

"He will not tell me. But it is not the paralysis alone; he might recover from that—so young still. There are other symptoms; that dreadful habit of stimulants. He sinks if he has them not—they hasten death if he has. But—but—but—HE IS MINE, AND MINE ONLY, TO THE GRAVE NOW!"

CHAPTER XI.

The Crisis—Public and Private.

LADY MONTFORT'S carriage stopped at Colonel Morley's door just as Carr Vipont was coming out. Carr, catching sight of her, bustled up to the carriage window.

"My dear Lady Montfort!—not seen you for an age! What times we live in! How suddenly THE CRISIS has come upon us! Sad loss in poor dear Montfort; no wonder you mourn for him! Had his failings, true—who is not mortal?—but always voted right; always to be relied on in times of CRISIS! But this crotchety fellow, who has so unluckily, for all but himself, walked into that property, is the loosest fish! And what is a House divided against itself! Never was the Constitution in such peril! —I say it deliberately!—and here is the Head of the Viponts humming and haaing, and asking whether Guy Darrell will join the Cabinet. And if Guy Darrell will not, we have no more chance of the Montfort interest than if we were Peep-o'-Day Boys. But excuse me—I must be off; every moment is precious in times of CRISIS. Think, if we can't form a Cabinet by to-morrow night—only think what may happen; the other fellows will come in, and then—THE DELUGE!"

Carr is gone to find mops and Dame Partingtons to stave off the Deluge. Colonel Morley has obeyed Lady Montfort's summons, and has entered the carriage. Before she can speak, however, he has rushed into the subject of which he himself is full. "Only think—I knew it would be so when the moment came; all depends upon Guy Darrell! Montfort, who seems always in a fright lest a newspaper should fall on his head and crush him, says that if Darrell, whom he chooses to favor just because the newspapers do, declines to join, the newspapers will say the CRISIS is a job! Fancy!—a job—the CRISIS! Lord Mowbray de l'Arco and Sir Josiah Snodge, who are both necessary to a united government, but who unluckily detest each other, refuse to sit in the same Cabinet, unless Darrell sit between—to save them, I suppose, from the fate of the cats of Kilkenny. Sir John Cantly, our crack county member, declares that if Darrell does not come in, 'tis because the CRISIS is going too far! Harry Bold, our most popular speaker, says, if Darrell stay out, 'tis a sign that the CRISIS is a retrograde movement! In short, without Darrell, the CRISIS will be a failure, and the House of Vipont smashed—Lady Montfort—smashed! I sent a telegram (oh, that I should live to see such a word introduced into the English language!—but, as Carr says, what times these are!) to Fawley this morning, entreating Guy to come up to town at once. He answers by a line from Horace, which means, 'that he will see me shot first.' I must go down to him; only waiting to know the result of certain negotiations as to measures. I have but one hope. There *is* a measure which Darrell always privately advocated—which he thoroughly understands—which, placed in his hands, would be triumphantly carried; one of those measures, Lady Montfort, which, if defective, shipwreck a government; if framed as Guy Darrell could frame it, immortalize the minister who concocts and carries them. This is all that Darrell needs to complete his fame and career. This is at length an occasion to secure a durable name in the history of his country; let him reject it, and I shall tell him frankly that his life has been but a brilliant failure. Since he has not a seat in Parliament, and usage requires the actual possession of that qualification for a seat in the Cabinet, we must lose his voice in the Commons. But we can arrange that; for if Darrell will but join the government and go to the Lords, Sir Josiah Snodge, who has a great deal of voice and a great deal of jealousy, will join too—head the Vipont interests in the Commons—and speak to the country—speak every night—and all night too, if required. Yes! Darrell must take the peerage—devote himself for a year or two to this great measure—to the consolidation of his fame—to the redemption of the House of Vipont—and to the Salvation of the Empire; and then, if he please, 'solve senescentem'—that is, he may retire from harness, and browse upon laurels for the rest of his days!"

Colonel Morley delivered himself of this long address without interruption from a listener interested in every word that related to Guy Darrell, and in every hope that could reunite him to the healthful activities of life.

It was now Lady Montfort's turn to speak; though, after subjects so momentous as the CRISIS and its speculative consequences, private affairs, relating to a poor little girl like Sophy—nay, the mere private affairs of Darrell himself, seemed a pitiful bathos. Lady Montfort, however, after a few words of womanly comment upon the only part of the Colonel's discourse which touched her heart, hastened on to describe her interview with Arabella, and the melancholy condition of Darrell's once formidable son-in-law. For that last the Colonel evinced no more compassionate feeling than any true Englishman, at the time I am writing, would demonstrate for a murderous Sepoy tied to the mouth of a cannon.

"A very good riddance!" said the Colonel, dryly. "Great relief to Darrell, and to every one else whom that monster tormented and preyed on; and with his life will vanish the only remaining obstacle in righting poor Willy's good name. I hope to live to collect, from all parts of the country, Willy's old friends, and give them a supper, at which I suppose I must not get drunk, though I should rather like it than not! But I interrupt you; go on."

Lady Montfort proceeded to state the substance of the papers she had perused in reference to the mystery which had been the cause of so much disquietude and bitterness.

The Colonel stretched out his hand eagerly for the documents thus quoted. He hurried his eye rapidly over the contents of the first paper he lit on, and then said, pulling out his watch, "Well, I have half an hour yet to spare in discussing these matters with you—may I order your coachman to drive round the Regent's Park?—better than keeping it thus at my door —with four old maids for opposite neighbors." The order was given, and the Colonel again returned to the papers. Suddenly he looked up —looked full into Lady Montfort's face, with a thoughtful, searching gaze, which made her drop her own eyes; and she saw that he had been reading Jasper's confession, relating to his device for breaking off her engagement to Darrell, which in her hurry and excitement she had neglected to abstract from the other documents. "Oh, not that paper—you are not to read that," she cried, quickly covering the writing with her hand.

"Too late, my dear cousin. I have read it. All is now clear. Lionel was right; and I was right, too, in my convictions though Darrell put so coolly aside my questions when I was last at Fawley. I am justified now in all the pains I took to secure Lionel's marriage—in the cunning cruelty of my letter to George! Know, Lady Montfort, that if Lionel had sacrificed his happiness to respect for Guy's ancestor-worship, Guy Darrell would have held himself bound in honor never to marry again. He told me so—told me he should be a cheat if he took any step to rob one from whom he had exacted such an offering—of the name, and the heritage for which the offering had been made. And I then resolved that County Guy should not thus irrevocably shut the door on his own happiness! Lady Montfort, you know that this man loves you—as, verily, I believe, never man in our cold century loved woman—through desertion —through change—amidst grief—amidst resentment—despite pride; dead to all other love—shrinking from all other ties—on, constant on —carrying in the depth of his soul to the verge of age, secret and locked up, the hopeless passion of his manhood. Do you not see that it is through you, and you alone, that Guy Darrell has for seventeen years been lost to the country he was intended to serve and to adorn? Do you not feel that if he now reject this last opportunity to redeem years so wasted, and achieve a fame that may indeed link his Ancestral Name to the honors of Posterity, you, and you alone, are the cause?"

"Alas—alas—but what can I do?"

"Do!—ay, true. The poor fellow is old now; you can not care for him!—you still young, and so unluckily beautiful!—you, for whom young princes might vie. True; you can have no feeling for Guy Darrell, except pity!"

"*Pity!* I hate the word!" cried Lady Montfort, with as much petulance as if she had still been the wayward lively Caroline of old.

Again the Man of the World directed toward her face his shrewd eyes, and dropped out, "See him!"

"But I have seen him. You remember I went to plead for Lionel and Sophy — in vain!"

"Not in vain. George writes me word that he has informed you of Darrell's consent to their marriage. And I am much mistaken if his greatest consolation in the pang that consent must have cost him is not the thought that it relieves you from the sorrow and remorse his refusal had occasioned to you. Ah! there is but one person who can restore Darrell to the world—and that is yourself!"

Lady Montfort shook her head drearily.

"If I had but an excuse—with dignity—with self-respect—to—to—"

"An excuse! You have an absolute necessity to communicate with Darrell. You have to give to him these documents—to explain how you came by them. Sophy is with him; you are bound to see her on a subject of such vital importance to herself. Scruples of prudery! You, Caroline Lyndsay, the friend of his daughter—you whose childhood was reared in his very house—you whose mother owed to him such obligations—you to scruple in being the first to acquaint him with information affecting him so nearly! And why, forsooth? Because, ages ago, your hand was, it seems, engaged to him, and you were deceived by false appearances, like a silly young girl as you were."

Again Lady Montfort shook her head drearily—drearily.

"Well," said the Colonel, changing his tone, "I will grant that those former ties can't be renewed now. The man now is as old as the hills, and you had no right to expect that he would have suffered so much at being very naturally jilted for a handsome young Marquis."

"Cease, Sir, cease!" cried Caroline, angrily. The Colonel coolly persisted.

"I see now that such nuptials are out of the question. But has the world come to such a pass that one can never at any age have a friend in a lady unless she marry him? Scruple to accompany me—me, your cousin—me, your nearest surviving relation—in order to take back the young lady you have virtually adopted!—scruple to trust yourself for half an hour to that tumble-down old Fawley! Are you afraid that the gossips will say you, the Marchioness of Montfort, are running after a gloomy old widower, and scheming to be mistress of a mansion more like a ghost-trap than a residence for civilized beings? Or are you afraid that Guy Darrell will be fool and fop enough to think you are come to force on him your hand? Pooh, pooh! Such scruples would be in place if you were a portionless, forward girl; or if he were a conceited young puppy, or even a suspicious old *roué*. But Guy Darrell—a man of his station, his character, his years! And you, cousin Caroline, what are you? Surely, lifted above all such pitiful crotchets by a rank among the loftiest gentlewomen of England;—ample fortune, a beauty that in itself is rank and wealth; and, above all, a character that has passed with venerated purity through that ordeal in which every eye seeks a spot, every ear invites a scandal. But as you will. All I say is, that Darrell's future may be in your hands; that, after to-morrow, the occasion to give at least noble occupation and lasting renown to a mind that is devouring itself and stifling its genius, may be

irrevocably lost; and that I do believe, if you said to-morrow to Guy Darrell, 'You refused to hear me when I pleaded for what you thought a disgrace to your name, and yet even *that* you at last conceded to the voice of affection as if of duty—now hear me when I plead by the side of your oldest friend on behalf of your honor, and in the name of your forefathers'—if YOU say THAT, he is won to his country. You will have repaired a wrong; and, pray, will you have compromised your dignity?"

Caroline had recoiled into the corner of the carriage, her mantle close drawn round her breast, her vail lowered; but no sheltering garb or vail could conceal her agitation.

The Colonel pulled the check-string. "Nothing so natural; you are the widow of the Head of the House of Vipont. You are, or ought to be, deeply interested in its fate. An awful CRISIS, long expected, has occurred. The House trembles. A connection of that House can render it an invaluable service; that connection is the man at whose hearth your childhood was reared; and you go with me—me, who am known to be moving heaven and earth for every vote that the House can secure, to canvass this wavering connection for his support and assistance. Nothing, I say, so natural; and yet you scruple to serve the House of Vipont—to save your country! You may well be agitated. I leave you to your own reflections. My time runs short; I will get out here. Trust me with these documents. I will see to the rest of this long painful subject. I will send a special report to you this evening, and you will reply by a single line to the prayer I have ventured to address to you."

CHAPTER XII., AND LAST.

In which the Author endeavors, to the best of his ability, to give a final reply to the question, "What will he do with it?"

SCENE—The banks of the lake at Fawley. George is lending his arm to Waife; Mrs. Morley, seated on her camp-stool, at the opposite side of the water, is putting the last touch to her sketch of the Manor House; Sir Isaac, reclined, is gravely contemplating the swans; the doe, bending over him, occasionally nibbles his ear; Fairthorn has uncomfortably edged himself into an angle of the building, between two buttresses, and is watching, with malignant eye, two young forms, at a distance, as they move slowly yonder, side by side, yet apart, now lost, now emerging, through the gaps between melancholy leafless trees. Darrell, having just quitted Waife and George, to whose slow pace he can ill time his impatient steps, wonders why Lionel, whom, on arriving, he had, with brief cordial words, referred to Sophy for his fate, has taken more than an hour to ask a simple question, to which the reply may be pretty well known beforehand. He advances toward those melancholy trees. Suddenly one young form leaves the other—comes with rapid stride through the withered fern. Pale as death Lionel seizes Guy Darrell's hand with convulsive grasp, and says, "I must leave you, Sir. God bless you! All is over. I was the blindest fool—she refuses me!"

"Refuses you!—impossible! For what reason?"

"She can not love me well enough to marry," answered Lionel, with a quivering lip, and an attempt at that irony in which all extreme anguish, at least in our haughty sex, delights to seek refuge or disguise. "Likes me as a friend, a brother, and so forth, but nothing more. All a mistake, Sir—all, except your marvelous kindness to me—to her—for which Heaven ever bless you!"

"Yes, all a mistake of your own, foolish boy," said Darrell, tenderly; and, turning sharp, he saw Sophy hastening by, quickly and firmly, with her eyes looking straightward—on into space. He threw himself in her path.

"Tell this dull kinsman of mine that 'faint heart never won fair lady.' You do not mean seriously, deliberately, to reject a heart that will never be faint with a meaner fear than that of losing you?"

Poor Sophy! She kept her blue eyes still on the cold gray space, and answered by some scarce audible words—words which in every age girls intending to say No seem to learn as birds learn their song—no one knows who taught them, but they are ever to the same tune. "Sensible of the honor"—"Grateful"—"Some one more worthy"—etc., etc.

Darrell checked this embarrassed jargon. "My question, young lady, is solemn; it involves the destiny of two lives. Do you mean to say that you do not love Lionel Haughton well enough to give him your hand, and return the true faith which is pledged with his own?"

"Yes," said Lionel, who had gained the side of his kinsman: "yes, that is it. Oh Sophy—Ay or No?"

"No!" fell from her pale, firm lips—and in a moment more she was at Waife's side, and had drawn him away from George. "Grandfather, grandfather!—home, home; let us go home at once, or I shall die!"

Darrell has kept his keen sight upon her movements—upon her countenance. He sees her gesture—her look—as she now clings to her grandfather. The blue eyes are not now coldly fixed on level air, but raised upward, as for strength from above. The young face is sublime with its woe, and with its resolve.

"Noble child!" muttered Darrell. "I think I see into her heart. If so, poor Lionel indeed! *My* pride has yielded, hers never will!"

Lionel, meanwhile, kept beating his foot on the ground, and checking indignantly the tears that sought to gather to his eyes. Darrell threw his arm round the young man's shoulder, and led him gently, slowly away, by the barbed thorn-tree—on by the moss-grown crags.

Waife, meanwhile, is bending his ear to Sophy's lip. The detestable Fairthorn emerges from between the buttresses, and shambles up to George, thirsting to hear his hopes confirmed, and turning his face back to smile congratulation on the gloomy old house that he thinks he has saved from the lake.

Sophy has at last convinced Waife that his senses do not deceive him, nor hers wander. She has said, "Oh, grandfather, let us ever henceforth be all in all to each other. You are not

ashamed of me—I am so proud of you. But there are others akin to me, grandfather, whom we will not mention; and you would be ashamed of me if I brought disgrace on one who would confide to me his name, his honor; and should I be as proud of you, if you asked me to do it?"

At these words Waife understands all, and he has not an argument in reply; and he suffers Sophy to lead him toward the house. Yes, they will go hence—yes, there shall be no schemes of marriage! They had nearly reached the door when the door itself opened violently, and a man rushing forth caught Sophy in his arms, and kissed her forehead, her cheek, with a heartiness that it is well Lionel did not witness! Speechless and breathless with resentment, Sophy struggled, and in vain, when Waife, seizing the man by the collar, swung him away with a "How dare you, Sir?" that was echoed back from the hillocks—summoned Sir Isaac at full gallop from the lake—scared Fairthorn back to his buttresses—roused Mrs. Morley from her sketch—and, smiting the ears of Lionel and Darrell, hurried them, mechanically as it were, to the spot from which that thunder-roll had pealed.

"How dare I?" said the man, resettling the flow of his disordered coat—"How dare *I* kiss my own niece?—my own sister's orphan child? Venerable Bandit, I have a much better right than you have. Oh my dear injured Sophy, to think that I was ashamed of your poor cotton print—to think that to your pretty face I have been owing fame and fortune—and you, you wandering over the world—child of the sister of whose beauty I was so proud—of her for whom, alas in vain! I painted Watteaus and Greuzes upon screens and fans!" Again he clasped her to his breast; and Waife this time stood mute, and Sophy passive—for the man's tears were raining upon her face, and washed away every blush of shame as to the kiss they hallowed.

"But where is my old friend William Losely?—where is Willy?" said another voice, as a tall thin personage stepped out from the hall, and looked poor Waife unconsciously in the face.

"Alban Morley!" faltered Waife; *you* are but little changed!"

The Colonel looked again, and in the elderly, lame, one-eyed, sober-looking man, recognized the wild, jovial Willy, who had tamed the most unruly fillies, taken the most frantic leaps, caroled forth the blithest song—madcap, good fellow, frolicsome, childlike darling of gay and grave, young and old!

"'Eheu, fugaces, Postume, Postume,
Labuntur anni,'"

said the Colonel, insensibly imbibing one of those Horatian particles that were ever floating in that classic atmosphere—to Darrell medicinal, to Fairthorn morbific. "Years slide away, Willy, mutely as birds skim through air; but when friend meets with friend after absence, each sees the print of their crow's-feet on the face of the other. But we are not too old yet, Willy, for many a meet—at the fireside! Nothing else in our studs, we can still mount our hobbies; and thorough-bred hobbies contrive to be in at the death. But you are waiting to learn by what title and name this stranger lays claim to so peerless a niece. Know then—Ah, here comes Darrell. Guy Darrell, in this young lady you will welcome the grandchild of Sidney Branthwaite, our old Eton school friend, a gentleman of as good blood as any in the land!"

"None better," cried Fairthorn, who has sidled himself into the group; "there's a note on the Branthwaite genealogy. Sir, in your father's great work upon 'Monumental Brasses.'"

"Permit me to conclude, Mr. Fairthorn," resumed the Colonel; "Monumental Brasses are painful subjects. Yes Darrell, yes Lionel; this fair creature, whom Lady Montfort might well desire to adopt, is the daughter of Arthur Branthwaite, by marriage with the sister of Frank Vance, whose name I shrewdly suspect nations will prize, and whose works princes will hoard, when many a long genealogy, all blazoned in azure and *or*, will have left not a scrap for the moths."

"Ah!" murmured Lionel, "was it not I, Sophy, who taught you to love your father's genius! Do you not remember how, as we bent over his volume, it seemed to translate to us our own feelings?—to draw us nearer together? He was speaking to us from his grave."

Sophy made no answer; her face was hidden on the breast of the old man, to whom she still clung closer and closer.

"Is it so? Is it certain? Is there no doubt that she is the child of these honored parents?" asked Waife, tremulously.

"None," answered Alban; "we bring with us proofs that will clear up all my story."

The old man bowed his head over Sophy's fair locks for a moment; then raised it, serene and dignified; "You are mine for a moment yet, Sophy," said he.

"Yours as ever—more fondly, gratefully than ever," cried Sophy.

"There is but one man to whom I can willingly yield you. Son of Charles Haughton, take my treasure."

"I consent to that," cried Vance, "though I am put aside like a Remorseless Baron. And, Lionello mio, if Frank Vance is a miser, so much the better for his niece."

"But," faltered Lionel.

Oh, falter not. Gaze into those eyes; read that blush now! She looks coy, not reluctant. She bends before him—adorned as for love, by all her native graces. Air seems brightened by her bloom. No more the Outlaw-Child of Ignominy and Fraud, but the Starry Daughter of Poetry and Art! Lo, where they glide away under the leafless, melancholy trees. Leafless and melancholy! No! Verdure and blossom and the smile of spring are upon every bough.

"I suppose," said Alban, "it will not now break Lionel's heart to learn that not an hour before I left London I heard from a friend at the Horse Guards that it has been resolved to substitute the —— regiment for Lionel's; and it will be for some time yet, I suspect, that he must submit to be ingloriously happy. Come this way, George; a word in your ear." And Alban, drawing his nephew aside, told him of Jasper's state, and of Arabella's request. "Not a word to-day on these mournful topics to poor Willy. To-day let nothing add to his pain to have lost a grandchild, or dim his consolation

in the happiness and security his Sophy gains in that loss. But to-morrow you will go and see this stricken-down sinner, and prepare the father for the worst. I made a point of seeing Dr. F. last night. He gives Jasper but a few weeks. He compares him to a mountain, not merely shattered by an earthquake, but burned out by its own inward fires."

"A few weeks only," sighed George. "Well, Time, that seems every thing to man, has not even an existence in the sight of God. To that old man I owe the power of speech to argue, to exhort, and to comfort; *he was training me to kneel by the death-bed of his son!*"

"You believe," asked the Man of the World, "in the efficacy of a death-bed repentance, when a sinner has sinned till the power of sinning be gone?"

"I believe," replied the Preacher, "that in health there is nothing so unsafe as trust in a death-bed repentance; I believe that on the death-bed it can not be unsafe to repent!"

Alban looked thoughtful, and George turned to rejoin Waife, to whom Vance was narrating the discovery of Sophy's parentage; while Fairthorn, as he listened, drew his flute from his pocket, and began screwing it, impatient to vent in delicate music what he never could have set into words for his blundering, untunable tongue. The Colonel joins Darrell, and hastens to unfold more fully the story which Vance is reciting to Waife.

Brief as it can, be the explanation due to the reader.

Vance's sister had died in child-birth. The poor young poet, unfitted to cope with penury, his sensitive nature combined with a frame that could feebly resist the strain of exhausting emotions, disappointed in fame, despairing of fortune, dependent for bread on his wife's boyish brother, and harassed by petty debts in a foreign land, had been fast pining away, even before an affliction to which all the rest seemed as naught. With that affliction he broke down at once, and died a few days after his wife, leaving an infant not a week old. A French female singer, of some repute in the theatres, and making a provincial tour, was lodging in the same house as the young couple. She had that compassionate heart which is more common than prudence or very strict principle with the tribes who desert the prosaic true world for the light, sparkling, false one. She had assisted the young couple, in their later days, with purse and kind offices; had been present at the birth of the infant—the death of the mother; and had promised Arthur Branthwaite that she would take care of his child, until she could safely convey it to his wife's relations; while he wept to own that they, poor as himself, must regard such a charge as a burden.

The singer wrote to apprise Mrs. Vance of the death of her daughter and son-in-law, and the birth of the infant whom she undertook shortly to send to England. But the babe, whom, meanwhile, she took to herself, got hold of her affections; with that yearning for children which makes so remarkable and almost uniform a characteristic of French women (if themselves childless) in the wandering Bohemian class that separates them from the ordinary household affections never dead in the heart of women till womanhood itself be dead, the singer clung to the orphan little one to whom she was for the moment rendering the cares of a mother. She could not bear to part with it; she resolved to adopt it as her own. The knowledge of Mrs. Vance's circumstances—the idea that the orphan, to herself a blessing, would be an unwelcome incumbrance to its own relations—removed every scruple from a mind unaccustomed to suffer reflection to stand in the way of an impulse. She wrote word to Mrs. Vance that the child was dead. She trusted that her letter would suffice, without other evidence, to relations so poor, and who could have no suspicion of any interest to deceive them. Her trust was well founded. Mrs. Vance and the boy Frank, whose full confidence and gratitude had been already secured to their correspondent for her kind offices to the young parents, accepted, without a demur or a question, the news that the infant was no more. The singer moved on to the next town at which she was professionally engaged. The infant, hitherto brought up by hand, became ailing. The medical adviser called in recommended the natural food, and found, in a village close by, the nurse to whom, a little time before, Jasper Losely had consigned his own daughter. The latter died; the nurse then removed to Paris, to reside with the singer, who had obtained a lucrative appointment at one of the metropolitan theatres. In less than two years the singer herself fell a victim to a prevailing epidemic. She had lived without thought of the morrow; her debts exceeded her means; her effects were sold. The nurse, who had meanwhile become a widow, came for advice and refuge to her sister, was in the service of Gabrielle Desmarets. Gabrielle being naturally appealed to, saw the infant, heard the story, looked into the statement which, by way of confession, the singer had drawn up, and signed, in a notary's presence, before she died; looked into the letters from Mrs. Vance, and the school-boy scrawls from Frank, both to the singer and to the child's parents, which the actress had carefully preserved; convinced herself of the poverty and obscurity of the infant's natural guardians and next of kin; and said to Jasper, who was just dissipating the fortune handed over to him as survivor of his wife and child, "There is what, if well managed, may retain your hold on a rich father-in-law, when all else has failed. You have but to say that this infant is his grandchild; the nurse we can easily bribe, or persuade to confirm the tale. I, whom he already knows as that respectable baroness, your Matilda's friend, can give to the story some probable touches. The lone, childless man must rejoice to think that a tie is left to him. The infant is exquisitely pretty; her face will plead for her. His heart will favor the idea too much to make him very rigorous in his investigations. Take the infant. Doubtless in your own country you can find some one to rear it at little or no expense, until the time come for appeal to your father-in-law, when no other claim on his purse remains."

Jasper assented with the *insouciant* docility by which he always acknowledged Gabrielle's astuter intellect. He saw the nurse; it was clear that she had nothing to gain by taking the child to English relations so poor. They might re-

fuse to believe her, and certainly could not reward. To rid herself of the infant, and obtain the means to return to her native village with a few hundred francs in her purse, there was no promise she was not willing to make, no story she was too honest to tell, no paper she was too timid to sign. Jasper was going to London on some adventure of his own. He took the infant —chanced on Arabella;—the reader knows the rest. The indifference ever manifested by Jasper to a child not his own—the hardness with which he had contemplated and planned his father's separation from one whom he had imposed by false pretexts on the old man's love, and whom he only regarded as an alien encumbrance upon the scanty means of her deluded protector—the fitful and desultory mode in which (when, contrary to the reasonings which Gabrielle had based upon a very large experience of the credulities of human nature in general, but in utter ignorance of the nature peculiar to Darrell) his first attempt at imposition had been so scornfully resisted by his indignant father-in-law—he had played fast and loose with a means of extortion which, though loth to abandon, he knew would not bear any strict investigation;—all this is now clear to the reader. And the reader will also comprehend why, partly from fear that his father might betray him, partly from a compassionate unwillingness to deprive the old man of a belief in which William Losely said he had found such solace, Jasper, in his last interview with his father, shrunk from saying, "but she is not your grandchild!" The idea of recurring to the true relations of the child naturally never entered into Jasper's brain. He considered them to be as poor as himself. *They* buy from him the child of parents whom they had evidently, by their letters, taxed themselves to the utmost, and in vain, to save from absolute want! So wild seemed that notion that he had long since forgotten relations so useless existed. Fortunately the Nurse had preserved the written statement of the singer—the letters by Mrs. Vance and Frank—the certificate of the infant's birth and baptism—some poor relics of Sophy's ill-fated parents—manuscripts of Arthur's poems—baby-caps with initials and armorial crests, wrought before her confinement by the young wife—all of which had been consigned by the singer to the nurse, and which the nurse willingly disposed of to Mrs. Crane, with her own formal deposition of the facts, confirmed by her sister, Gabrielle's old confidential attendant, and who, more favored than her mistress, was living peaceably in the rural scenes of her earlier innocence, upon the interest of the gains she had saved in no innocent service—confirmed yet more by references to many whose testimonies could trace, step by step, the child's record from its birth to its transfer to Jasper, and by the brief but distinct avowal, in tremulous lines, writ by Jasper himself. As a skein crossed and tangled, when the last knot is loosened, slips suddenly free, so this long-bewildering mystery now became clear as a commonplace! What years of suffering Darrell might have been saved had he himself seen and examined the nurse—had his inquiry been less bounded by the fear of his pride—had the great lawyer not had himself for a client!

Darrell silently returned to Alban Morley the papers over which he had cast his eye as they walked slowly to and fro the sloping banks of the lake.

"It is well," said he, glancing fondly, as Fairthorn had glanced before him, toward the old House, now freed from doom, and permitted to last its time; "it is well," he repeated, looking away toward that part of the landscape where he could just catch a glimpse of Sophy's light form beyond the barbed thorn-tree; "it is well," he repeated thrice, with a sigh. "Poor human nature! Alban, can you conceive it, I, who once so dreaded that that poor child should prove to be of my blood, now, in knowing that she is not, feel a void, a loss! To Lionel I am so distant a kinsman!—to his wife, to his children, what can I be? A rich old man; the sooner he is in his grave the better. A few tears, and then the will! But, as your nephew says, 'This life is but a school;' the new-comer in the last form thinks the head-boy just leaving so old! And to us, looking back, it seems but the same yesterday whether we were the last comer or the head-boy."

"I thought," said Alban, plaintively, "that, for a short time at least, I had done with 'painful subjects.' You revel in them! County Guy, you have not left school yet; leave it with credit; win the best prize." And Alban plunged at once into The Crisis. He grew eloquent; the Party, the Country, the Great Measure to be intrusted to Darrell, if he would but undertake it as a member of the Cabinet; the Peerage, the House of Vipont, and immortal glory!—eloquent as Ulysses haranguing the son of Peleus in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Darrell listened coldly; only while Alban dwelt on "the Measure" in which, when it was yet too unripe for practical statesmen, he had attached his faith as a thinker, the orator's eye flashed with young fire. A great truth is eternally clear to a great heart that has once nourished its germ and foreseen its fruits. But when Alban quitted that part of his theme all the rest seemed wearisome to his listener. They had now wound their walk to the opposite side of the lake, and paused near the thick beech-trees, hallowed and saddened by such secret associations to the mournful owner.

"No, my dear Alban," said Darrell, "I can not summon up sufficient youth and freshness of spirit to re-enter the turbulent arena I have left. Ah! look yonder where Lionel and Sophy move! Give me, I do not say Lionel's years, but Lionel's wealth of hope, and I might still have a wish for fame and a voice for England; but it is a subtle truth that where a man misses a home, a link between his country and himself is gone. Vulgar ambition may exist—the selfish desire of power; they were never very strong in me, and now less strong than the desire of rest; but that beautiful, genial, glorious union of all the affections of social citizen, which begins at the hearth and widens round the land, is not for the hermit's cell."

Alban was about to give up the argument in irritable despair, when, happening to turn his eye toward the farther depth of the beech-grove, he caught a glimpse—no matter what of; but quickening his step in the direction to which his glance had wandered, he seated himself on the gnarled roots of a tree that seemed the

monarch of the wood, wide-spreading as that under which Tityrus reclined of old; and there, out of sight of the groups on the opposite banks of the lake — there, as if he had sought the gloomiest and most secret spot for what he had yet to say, he let fall, in the most distinct yet languid tones of his thorough-bred, cultured enunciation, "I have a message to you from Lady Montfort. Restless man, do come nearer, and stand still. I am tired to death." Darrell approached, and, leaning against the trunk of the giant tree, said, with folded arms and compressed lips,

"A message from Lady Montfort!"

"Yes. I should have told you, by-the-by, that it was she who, being a woman, of course succeeded where I, being a man, despite incredible pains and trouble, signally failed, discovered Arabella Fossett, *alias* Crane, and obtained from her the documents which free your life forever from a haunting and torturing fear. I urged her to accompany me hither, and place the documents herself in your hand. She refused; you were not worth so much trouble, my dear Guy. I requested her at least to suffer me to show to you a paper containing Jasper Losely's confession of a conspiracy to poison her mind against you some years ago—a conspiracy so villainously ingenious that it would have completely exonerated any delicate and proud young girl from the charge of fickleness in yielding to an impulse of pique and despair. But Lady Montfort did not wish to be exonerated; your good opinion has ceased to be of the slightest value to her. But to come to the point. She bade me tell you that if you persist in sheltering yourself in a hermit's cell from the fear of meeting her—if she be so dangerous to your peace—you may dismiss such absurd apprehension. She is going abroad; and, between you and me, my dear fellow, I have not a doubt that she will marry again before six months are out. I spoke of your sufferings; she told me she had not the smallest compassion for them."

"Alban Morley, you presumed to talk thus of me?" cried Darrell, livid with rage.

"Strike, but hear me. It is true you would not own, when I was last at Fawley, that she was the cause of your secluded life, of your blighted career; but I knew better. However, let me go on before you strangle me. Lady Montfort's former feelings of friendship for you are evidently quite changed; and she charged me to add that she really hoped that you would exert your good sense and pride (of which Heaven knows you have plenty) to eradicate an absurd and romantic sentiment, so displeasing to her, and so—"

"It is false! it is false! What have I done to you, Colonel Morley, that you should slander me thus? *I* send you messages of taunt and insult, Mr. Darrell! I—*I!*—you can not believe it—you can not!"

Caroline Montfort stood between the two, as if she had dropped from heaven.

A smile, half in triumph, half in irony, curved the lip of the fine gentleman. It faded instantly as his eye turned from the face of the earnest woman to that of the earnest man. Alban Morley involuntarily bowed his head, murmured some words, unheard, and passed from the place, unheeded.

Not by concert nor premeditation was Caroline Montfort on that spot. She had consented to accompany her cousin to Fawley, but before reaching the park-gates her courage failed her; she would remain within the carriage; the Colonel, wanted in London as soon as possible, whatever the result of his political mission to Darrell, could not remain long at Fawley; she would return with him. Vance's presence and impatient desire to embrace his niece did not allow the Colonel an occasion for argument and parley. Chafed at this fresh experience of the capricious uncertainty of woman, he had walked on with Vance to the Manor House. Left alone, Caroline could not endure the stillness and inaction which increased the tumult of her thoughts; she would at least have one more look—it might be the last—at the scenes in which her childhood had sported—her youth known its first happy dreams. But a few yards across those circumscribed demesnes, on through those shadowy, serried groves, and she should steal, unperceived, in view of the house, the beloved lake — perhaps even once more catch a passing glimpse of the owner. She resolved, she glided on, came; she gained the beech-grove, when, by the abrupt wind of the banks, Darrell and Alban came suddenly on the very spot. The flutter of her robe, as she turned to retreat, caught Alban's eye; the reader comprehends with what wily intent, conceived on the moment, that unscrupulous *intrigant* shaped the words that chained her footstep, and then stung her on to self-disclosure. Trembling and blushing, she now stood before the startled man —he, startled out of every other sentiment and feeling than that of ineffable, exquisite delight to be once more in her presence; she, after her first passionate outburst, hastening on, in confused, broken words, to explain that she was there but by accident — by chance; confusion growing deeper and deeper—how explain the motive that had charmed her steps to the spot?

Suddenly from the opposite bank came the music of the magic flute, and her voice as suddenly stopped and failed her.

"Again — again," said Darrell, dreamily. "The same music! the same air! and this the same place on which we two stood together when I first dared to say, 'I love!' Look, we are under the very tree! Look, there is the date I carved on the bark when you were gone, but had left Hope behind. Ah! Caroline, why can I not now resign myself to age? Why is youth, while I speak, rushing back into my heart, into my soul? Why can not I say, 'Gratefully I accept your tender friendship; let the past be forgotten; through what rests to me of the future while on earth, be to me as a child?' I can not —I can not! Go!"

She drew nearer to him, gently, timidly. "Even that, Darrell—even that; something in your life—let me be something still!"

"Ay," he said with melancholy bitterness, "you deceive me no longer now! You own that, when here we stood last, and exchanged our troth, you in the blossom, and I in the prime, of life—you own that it was no woman's love, deaf to all calumny, proof to all craft that could wrong the absent; no woman's love, warm as the heart, undying as the soul, that you pledged me then."

"Darrell, it was not—though then I thought it was."

"Ay, ay," he continued with a smile, as if of triumph in his own pangs, "so *that* truth is confessed at last! And when, once more free, you wrote to me the letter I returned, rent in fragments, to your hand—or when, forgiving my rude outrage and fierce reproach, you spoke to me so gently yonder, a few weeks since, in these lonely shades, then what were your sentiments, your motives? Were they not those of a long-suppressed and kind remorse?—of a charity akin to that which binds rich to poor, bows happiness to suffering?—some memories of gratitude—nay, perhaps of childlike affection?—all amiable, all generous, all steeped in that sweetness of nature to which I unconsciously rendered justice in the anguish I endured in losing you; but do not tell me that even *then* you were under the influence of woman's love."

"Darrell, I was not."

"You own it, and you suffer me to see you again! Trifler and cruel one, is it but to enjoy the sense of your undiminished, unalterable power?"

"Alas, Darrell! alas! why am I here?—why so yearning, yet so afraid to come? Why did my heart fail when these trees rose in sight against the sky?—why, why—why was it drawn hither by the spell I could not resist? Alas, Darrell, alas! I am a woman *now*—and—and this is—" She lowered her vail and turned away; her lips could not utter the word, because the word was not pity, not remorse, not remembrance, not even affection; and the woman loved now too well to subject to the hazard of rejection—LOVE!

"Stay, oh stay!" cried Darrell. "Oh that I could dare to ask you to complete the sentence! I know—I know by the mysterious sympathy of my own soul, that you could never deceive me more! Is it—is it—" His lips falter too; but her hand is clasped in his; her head is reclined upon his breast; the vail is withdrawn from the sweet downcast face; and softly on her ear steal the murmured words, "Again and now, till the grave—Oh, by this hallowing kiss, again—the Caroline of old!"

Fuller and fuller, spreading, wave after wave, throughout the air, till it seem interfused and commingled with the breath which the listeners breathe, the flute's mellow gush streams along. The sun slopes in peace toward the west; not a cloud in those skies, clearer seen through yon boughs stripped of leaves, and rendering more vivid the evergreen of the arbute and laurel.

Lionel and Sophy are now seated on yon moss-grown trunk; on either side the old gray-haired man, as if agreeing for a while even to forget each other, that they may make *him* feel how fondly he is remembered. Sophy is resting both her hands on the old man's shoulder, looking into his face, and murmuring in his ear with voice like the coo of a happy dove. Ah! fear not, Sophy; *he* is happy too—*he*, who never thinks of himself. Look—the playful smile round his arch lips; look—now he is showing off Sir Isaac to Vance; with austere solemnity the dog goes through his tricks; and Vance, with hand stroking his chin, is moralizing on all that might have befallen had he grudged his three pounds to that famous INVESTMENT!

Behind that group, shadowed by the Thorn-tree, stands the PREACHER, thoughtful and grave, foreseeing the grief that must come to the old man with the morrow, when he will learn that a guilty son nears his end, and will hasten to comfort Jasper's last days with pardon. But the Preacher looks not down to the death-couch alone; on and high over death looks the Preacher! By what words heavenly mercy may lend to his lips shall he steal away, yet in time, to the soul of the dying, and justify murmurs of hope to the close of a life so dark with the shades of its past? And to him, to the Preacher, they who survive—the two mourners—will come in their freshness of sorrow! He the old man? Nay to him there will be comfort. His spirit Heaven's kindness had tempered to trials; and, alas! for *that* son, what could father hope more than a death free from shame, and a chance yet vouchsafed for repentance? But she, the grim, iron-gray woman? The Preacher's interest, I know, will soo centre on her:—And balm may yet fall on thy wounds, thou poor, grim, iron-gray, loving woman!

Lo!- that traitor, the Flute-player, over whom falls the deep grateful shade from the eaves of the roof-tree reprieved; though unconscious as yet of that happy change in the lot of the master, which, ere long, may complete (and haply for sons sprung in truth from the blood of the Darrell) yon skeleton pile, and consummate, for ends nobler far, the plan of a grand life imperfect;—though as yet the musician nor knows nor conjectures the joy that his infamous treason to Sophy so little deserves; yet, as if by those finer perceptions of sense, impressed, ere they happen, by changes of pleasure and of pain, which Art so mysteriously gives to the minds from which music is born, his airs, of themselves, float in joy: Like a bird at the coming of spring, it is gladness that makes him melodious.

And Alban Morley, seemingly intent upon the sketch which his amiable niece-in-law submits to his critical taste ere she ventures to show it to Vance, is looking from under his brows toward the grove, out from which, towering over all its dark brethren, soars the old trysting beech-tree, and to himself he is saying, "Ten to one that the old House of Vipont now weather the CRISIS; and a thousand to one that I find at last my arm-chair at the hearth of my school-friend, Guy Darrell!"

And the lake is as smooth as glass; and the swans, hearkening the music, rest still, with white breasts against the grass of the margin; and the doe, where she stands, her fore-feet in the water, lifts her head wistfully, with nostrils distended, and wondering soft eyes that are missing the master. Now full on the beech-grove shines the westering sun; out from the gloomy beech-grove into the golden sunlight—they come, they come—Man and the Helpmate, two lives rebetrothed—two souls reunited. Be it evermore! Amen.

THE END.

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